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THE LIFE

OF

LAURENCE STERNE.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., M.R.I.A.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR AND OTHERS.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ERRATA.

Vol. II., page 116, line 20, *omit* "his old college friend."
,, page 250, line 16, *for* "Violante" *read* "Violetti."

CRAZY CASTLE.

THE

LIFE OF LAURENCE STERNE.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

THE FASHIONABLE AUTHOR—LONDON AND PARIS.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

LONDON GLORIES.

When Mr. Sterne went up to London, in what may be called this jubilee year of his, travelling from York to the metropolis was a perilous as well as a costly business. So perilous, indeed, that the heads of well-ordered families set their house in order, and made their wills; and so costly, because the state of the roads entailed considerable delay at dear but indifferent hostelries. Two days were often consumed in getting from York to Stamford, and there is to be met in the pleasant rambles of Pennant, dismal accounts of the rude condition of the roads about this date. "Overturn of the York stage," is an entry to be found pretty frequently in public journals and annual registers. Tate Wilkinson has recorded his acute but comic sufferings

in the basket of "the machine;" with the exhausted condition in which he entered York. It was not surprising, therefore, that Mr. Shandy was careful to have inserted in Mrs. Shandy's marriage-settlement, a sort of proviso, in case his lady should, upon "false cries and tokens," put him "to the trouble and expense of a London journey."

It had been remarked, too, at this time, how, in spite of all such difficulties and impediments, the Yorkshire families, in particular, were drawn towards the metropolis—much to the prejudice of their estates and fortunes. Means were somehow got together, for a short and brilliant display in London, with the result of charges and debts, and general embarrassment. No wonder that Mr. Shandy should exclaim—"Was I an absolute prince, I would appoint able judges at every avenue of my metropolis, who should take cognizance of every fool's business who came there; and if, upon a fair and candid hearing, it appeared not of weight sufficient to leave his own home, and come up bag and baggage with his wife and children, they should all be sent back, from constable to constable, like vagrants, as they were, to the place of their legal settlements." He would take care that the metropolis "tottered not through its own weight;" that "the head should not be too big for the body," and that the extremes "now wasted and pinned in," be restored to their due "share of nourishment."

This sensible view was in Mr. Sterne's mind before he became famous. Scarcely a year after he

from booth to booth. What was purely fantastic and extravagant became all the rage, and the fashionable world was busy patronising "the wonderful dog of knowledge," and the "man with the box," and the fellow who was making a fortune "by tossing a straw from his toe to his nose." The pretentions of rival actresses at rival houses were more important than the concerns of the nation, and "a singing woman" might well go about collecting subscriptions in her coach-and-six. It was no encouraging season for an author or his books; for the artist, it was bitterly remarked, who could "jingle several bells fixed to his cap," was the only one likely to derive profit "from the labours of his head!" No one knew better, from woful experience, than the witty writer, that in so large a city as London, "it is better to be amusing than a useful member of society;" which was indeed, so far, one happy chance more for the author of "Tristram."

It was not, however, until Mr. Sterne was set down at his lodgings that his true London apotheosis set in. He and his book re-acted on each other. The odd Yorkshire Parson was received as a sort of Tristram in the flesh; and, with those who had no chance of coming in contact with him, the book received additional piquancy, from the knowledge that the strange author was among them—fluttering here and there, fêted, courted, and caressed. Thus the odd book and the odd clergyman made their way simultaneously.

Now, at last, was come his day of triumph. The obscure provincial persecution which broke the heart of the fanciful Yorick, and fretted sorely the Prebendary of York, were to become insignificant and contemptible, in the consolation of unbounded London notoriety and its results. "No one," writes Mr. Forster, "was so talked of in London this year, and no one so admired, as the tall, thin, hectic-looking Yorkshire Parson." It may be questioned, indeed, if any author in England has since been socially so much the rage. "East and west," it was said, "were moved alike."

He arrived in the first week of March, and stayed for a day or two at rooms, whose locality is not known, while he looked out for suitable apartments. He meant to establish himself "in Piccadilly or the Haymarket," but settled himself before the day was over, in rooms "one door from St. Alban's-street, in y^e^ Pell Mell." Dodsley's, with the "Tully's Head" over his door, was in the same street — number sixty-five — just opposite Marlborough House. It was a genteel quarter: and, three or four years later, another fashionable clergyman, the Rev. Dr. Dodd, coming to London from an obscure suburban cure, also pitched his tent in Pall Mall.

It may be questioned if those rooms ever saw such a flood of fine company as then invaded them. He was not twenty-four hours in town before his triumph began. It was enough to have turned any ordinary mortal's head. He was already engaged

to "ten noblemen and men of fashion" for dinners, which shows that his coming must have been eagerly looked for. Mr. Garrick was the first to take him by the hand, and overwhelmed him with favours and invitations. He had been the first, too, to discover the merits of "Tristram." He asked him frequently to dine, introduced him to everybody, and promised "numbers of great people" to carry the witty stranger to dine with them. He made him free of his theatre for the whole season, and undertook "the management of the booksellers," and to procure "a great price." No wonder, indeed, that when Mr. Sterne was writing down to the country to his "dear, dear Jenny," an eager, agitated account of these honours, he should say that his friend "leaves nothing undone that can do me either service or credit." Neither was it extravagance of him to add, that he had the greatest honours and civilities paid him "that were *ever known from the great.*"

Before that day was out he was in his lodgings in "y^e^ Pell Mell," which were "the genteelest in town." This is quite characteristic of Mr. Sterne, who, all through his life, aimed at what was "genteelest"—a not unprofitable ambition after all.

Even in this bewilderment he was mindful of his "dear, dear Jenny," and after the exciting day, when he was alone in his "genteel" rooms, at ten o'clock, sat down to write a hurried and joyful letter, rapturously detailing his triumphs thus far. Alas! that poor Mrs. Sterne, who kept all his

letters so religiously, should have none to show. All the news went to "Mrs. Joliffe's, in Stone Gate;" and from that source was, no doubt, filtered through York.

He tells her that he has arrived quite safe, all except that "hole in my heart which you have made." Unexpected success often imparts a general tenderness to the style, which is purely accidental, and the result of the immediate humour; but it is hard to excuse the very warm tone of these raptures:—

"And now, my dear, dear girl! let me assure you of the truest friendship for you that man ever bore towards a woman. Wherever I am my heart is warm towards you, and ever shall be till it is cold for ever."

There was in York another admirer who, it would appear, gave uneasiness to Mr. Sterne; but to whom dear, dear Jenny ordered herself to be denied, thus making Mr. Sterne's heart inexpressibly "easy," and causing him to utter profuse and rapturous thanks. This person is darkly hinted at as "you know who," and curiously recalls another "you know who," who some years later disturbed an intimacy of Mr. Sterne's with the famous Eliza. He assures his Kitty that it would have "stabbed my soul to have thought such a fellow could have the liberty of coming near you." He owns that he "would give a guinea for a squeeze of your hand." He does not conclude it until next day, when he is going to the oratorio:—"Adieu! dear and kind

girl! and believe me ever your kind and most affectionate admirer.

"Adieu! Adieu!

"P.S.—My service to your mamma."

Miss Fourmantelle is too busy to reply; so a few days later he writes again, still in the same triumphant strain. Fashionable crowns are still being heaped on him. He has the same story to tell; his rooms are filling "every hour" with "your great people of the first rank, who strive who shall most honour me." This was flattering testimony, and something that would astound the York lieges.

The following Monday he had fixed for a busy day, for returning the visits of all "your great people," *en masse*. The current of dinners was still flowing steadily: the famous Lord Chesterfield had asked him for that day; and Lord Rockingham, a young nobleman, who had the art of attaching friends nearly as strongly as Charles Fox, was to take him to Court the next Sunday. At the moment he was writing to "my dear lass," the room was full of visitors; still he made shift to snatch a moment to tell his "dear, dear, dear Kitty"—on this occasion three times dear—that he was hers "for ever and ever."

But in that letter, too, was a very important piece of news, significant enough for the York scandal-mongers, yet far more significant for posterity. "*Even*," he says, "*all the bishops have sent their compliments to me.*" Their compliments to the Parson-author of "Tristram," and his wallet of *double*

entendres! Such encouragement is sufficient to account for all poor Yorick's future vagaries. Such encouragement surely amounted to approval, and such approval as surely invited further efforts in the same direction. After the tumultuous acclaim of "your great people of fashion," it only wanted the episcopal "compliments" to make him lose his head. This little fact redeems this luckless bundle of Fourmantelle love-letters; and is really the best extenuation of Mr. Sterne's life. The episcopal "Benedicite" is, in truth, accountable for the seven succeeding volumes of "Tristram."

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

AN EPISCOPAL PATRON.

STILL there was to come a little drawback. There were some people in the metropolis who regarded the new-made reputation with envy. And one morning Mr. Garrick drops in with what he deemed a droll rumour that was going round the town. That "proud priest," Warburton, had been appointed to the See of Gloucester early that year, and his fierce controversies and insolent epithets were in everybody's mouth. Not yet, however, had Churchill taken fearful retribution. It had been given out that Mr. Sterne was already laying down the lines for his new volumes; and it was maliciously insinuated, that when "Tristram" was old enough to need a tutor, a ridiculous caricature of the Bishop would be introduced. It was improbable on the face of it. The sensible author of "Tristram," though the idea appears to have been suggested to him, was not likely to make so false a step, or to turn what might be a powerful patron into a dangerous enemy.

Mr. Garrick mentioned it lightly, but it annoyed Mr. Sterne terribly. "It was for all the world like

a cut across my fingers with a sharp penknife." But he assumed an air usual on such accidents, of less feeling than he had. "I saw the blood," he goes on, a little affectedly, "gave it a suck, wrapt it up, and thought no more about it."

He availed himself of his box at Drury Lane that night, where the great actor "astonished" him; came home, and, as in the case of all mercurial spirits, with the loneliness of the night, the little troubles of the day came on him as black spectres. Before going to bed, he sat down, and, at eleven o'clock, wrote to the actor a truly Shandean epistle —all dashes and short paragraphs. The first line of it began:—"'Twas all the world like a cut," &c.

"What the devil," he goes on, comically; "is there no one learned blockhead throughout the many schools of misapplied science in the Christian world to make a tutor of for my 'Tristram?' Are we so run out of stock that there is no one lumber-headed, muddle-headed, mortar-headed, pudding-headed chap among our Doctors, but I must disable my judgment by choosing a Warburton?" "This report," he adds, "might draw blood of the author of 'Tristram Shandy,' but could not harm such a man as the author of the Divine Legation, God bless him; though by-the-by (and according to the natural course of descents) the blessing should come from him to me."

Garrick was the fast friend of the Bishop, who was therefore likely to see some of these compliments. Warburton, too, had some experience of the

"lumber-headed," "mortar-headed" crew; and had been in many battles with the "learned blockheads." Skilful Mr. Sterne turns this ugly rumour, which might have injured another man, into a stepping-stone for an acquaintance. "Pray," he writes, "have you no interest, lateral or collateral, to get me introduced to his lordship?

"Why do you ask?

"My dear sir, I have no claim to such an honour, but what *arises from the honour and respect which, in the progress of my work, will be shown the world I owe to so great a man.*"

This was not an indifferent bid for the friendship of one who was always eager for any sort of notoriety, however questionable. A niche in the Tristram gallery was no small temptation. In short, as an opening it was eminently odd and Shandean, and the result quite answered Mr. Sterne's expectations.

Garrick was a warm and steady friend. He was at this time being annoyed by the fretful Arthur Murphy, and his behaviour to that sensitive dramatist shows a delicacy of mind, and a steadiness that would not take offence, for which the world has scarcely given him credit. He did not lose a moment in writing to Warburton; and on the next day, which was Friday, March the seventh, received an answer from the Bishop—one of those manly, admirably written epistles which that strange prelate could write, and which seem to have a meaning far deeper than what is expressed. It is valuable, too, as a hearty testimony of his sincere affection for

Garrick, as well as of the high character of Mr. Sterne, which had reached him by repute.

"My dear Sir," it ran, "you told me no news when you mentioned a circumstance of zeal for your friends; but you gave me much pleasure by it and the enclosed, to have an impertinent story confuted the first minute I heard it." Mr. Sterne's Shandean note had therefore been sent under cover, as perhaps he anticipated. He then goes on—"For I cannot but be pleased, I have no reason to change my opinion *of so agreeable and so original a writer* as Mr. Sterne—*I mean of his moral* character, of which I had received from several of my acquaintances *so very advantageous an account.* And I could not see how I could have held it, had the lying tale been true that he intended to injure one personally and entirely unknown to him. I own it would have grieved me, and so I believe it would him too, (*when he had known me and my enemies a little better,*) to have found himself in a company with a crew of the most egregious blockheads that ever abused the blessings of pen and ink.

"However, I pride myself in having warmly recommended 'Tristram Shandy' to all the best company in town, except that of Arthur's. I was charged in a very grave assembly, as Doctor Newton can tell him, for a particular patronizer of the work, and how I acquitted myself of the imputation, the said Doctor can tell him. . . . If Mr. Sterne will take me with all my infirmities, I shall be glad of the honour of being well known

to him; and he has the additional recommendation of being your friend." He then signs himself with a warmth unusual in intimacies between bishops and players—"Your most affectionate and faithful humble servant, W. GLOUCESTER."

Nothing can be happier than the way in which he puts the possibility of the rumour being true, and of its result in Mr. Sterne's finding himself in company with "a crew of the most egregious blockheads"—which conveys a delicate hint of Mr. Sterne's possible hostility being even prejudicial to his own interests. The character of this grave assembly we may conjecture, when it held two bishops—for Doctor Newton was Warburton's late bishop, the Bishop of Bristol. What sincerity there was in the Bishop's patronage, as well as in Sterne's disclaimer, and what seems the true history of his "Purse of Gold" story, will be shown a little later.

All this, it will be seen, was crowded into that first week of Mr. Sterne's arrival.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

ADVANCEMENT.

SOMEWAY that glorifying him by dinners seems to have been always associated with his name by a special sort of notoriety. For it was recollected years after, and even was mentioned at a certain dinner at General Paoli's, in the year 1773, of which party was Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, and Signor Martinelli. "The man Sterne," said Johnson, in his characteristic idiom, "I have been told, has had engagements for three months." This he gave in illustration of what is a truth now, as it was then (ushering it in, too, with his famous "Nay, sir"), that any man who has a name, or the power of pleasing, will be very generally invited in London. Goldsmith, who, years before, in the masque and domino of Lien Chi Altanghi, the Chinese citizen, had dealt heavy strokes at "Tristram," here put in a word of disparagement: "And a very dull fellow." But Johnson would not have the "man Sterne" unjustly condemned; and answers, "Why, no, sir!" Whence could Goldsmith have fetched that stupid rumour? For whatever his demerits, moral or otherwise, dull he certainly was not. We

have but to appeal to the society which he kept, and to his crowded dinner lists.*

Those social ovations still go on, gathering as they go. From morning till night his lodgings are "full of the greatest company." The dinner engagements still accumulate. For two days in succession he dined with Ladies of the Bedchamber. The next day Lord Rockingham asked him;—(Jaques Sterne, it will be remembered, had done this nobleman some election service). Then came Lord Edgecombe, Lord Winchelsea, Lord Littleton, a bishop, and many more. This sort of homage was flattering, but something more substantial was now coming.

Within two days two pieces of good fortune befell him. The first took the Eastern shape of a purse of gold; the second was a very fair slice of Church preferment. The incident of the purse of gold seems almost unaccountable.

The strange Bishop of Gloucester had responded heartily to his advances; and he, no doubt, was was the one "bishop" whom Mr. Sterne sets down in the list of his dining hosts. Beyond question, he had been entertained at Grosvenor Street. Warburton was prepared to like him, and was delighted with "Tristram." But it seems astonishing that his admiration should have taken the form of a

* M. Michot, one of the modern French translators of Sterne, has fallen into a droll mistake in reference to this passage. He renders it—"L'homme Sevère," *i. e.*, "the man Sterne," and calls it a "Calembour Anglais." This is nearly a pendant to the famous "L'homme vert et tranquille."

purse of gold. Such largesse is surprising as coming from a man of his temper and character; and it seems no less curious that an eleemosynary offering of such a shape should be accepted by one in Mr. Sterne's position. It does not appear that Warburton was fond of this species of magnificence, nor was it certainly a special fashion of the age. Whatever be the explanation, it must be taken as a token of boundless appreciation of Mr. Sterne's merits. By-and-by the whole town came to hear of it, and extravagant stories and questionable motives were naturally enough imputed to both parties in the transaction.

The next day came that other piece of good fortune. Lord Falconberg, or Fauconberg, as it was spelt, was then at court—a rather antique nobleman—to be presently made a Lord of the Bedchamber at sixty years of age. There was a pleasant perpetual curacy down in Yorkshire, not twenty miles from Sutton, in his gift, which happily fell vacant about this time; and the very day after the shower of gold descended from the episcopal Jupiter, Lord Fauconberg conferred it on Mr. Sterne. He did not lose a moment in writing the glad tidings to "dear Kitty," whom the rush of honours had not yet driven out of his head. He wrote in quite a transport, saying that now "all the most part of my sorrows and tears are going to be wiped away." This, it is to be presumed, is that local trouble or persecution so often before alluded to and hinted at in Yorick's

Life. He then longs "most impatiently to see my dear Kitty," who was meditating a journey to London. He adds, that "I have but one obstacle to my happiness now left, and what that is you know as well as I." A significant declaration, the drift of which there was no mistaking. What that obstacle is, the reader knows as well as Mr. Sterne or "dear Kitty." No attempt can be made to palliate this breach of conjugal decorum; but yet we cannot accept the elder Disraeli's sweeping judgment, that these papers are fatal to "poor Sterne's" reputation. For this very sentence, blameable as it is in one direction, is certainly good proof of what might be called the platonic nature of his intimacy with Miss Fourmantelle.

In his joy, however, he nearly doubled the emoluments of his new office, writing it down at a hundred and sixty pounds a-year, whereas on a nearer and more accurate view, it dwindled away to one hundred guineas a-year. It practically was but "seventy guineas a-year in my pocket," for he had to engage a curate to perform his Sutton and Stillington duties,—a fair sample of the market value of a curate's services in these days. Later on, in Dr. Goldsmith's time, they were to become passing rich on forty pounds a-year.

How did Mr. Sterne obtain this promotion? Writing to a titled lady friend of his, he seemed to take it as a matter of debt, saying he had "done his lordship some service, and he has requited it." But there is another tradition which

has passed down from one curate of Coxwold to another, and is very characteristic of Mr. Sterne. When the news of the vacancy reached him, it was said that he at once waited on Lord Fauconberg and reminded him of his old promise to give him the living. The nobleman looked surprised at this claim, and was, in fact, utterly unconscious of having bound himself by any such engagement. Mr. Sterne, however, persisted. When his visitor was gone, Lord Fauconberg is said to have thought the matter over seriously; and doubtful whether it would be advisable to support his memory at the risk of turning on himself the wit and malice of a Yorkshire neighbour, who, at that moment, had a sharp suppressed pamphlet lying in his desk, and was considered one of the humorists of London, wisely changed his purpose, and wrote to Mr. Sterne that he was to have the benefice.

It seems an improbable legend, for which there is no chapter nor verse, and with but the idlest of traditions for foundation. Mr. Sterne was not gifted with such matchless impudence, and his own statement to the lady of quality, "that he had done his lordship some service," shows that there was, at least, "consideration" for such a promise. But what effectually disposes of the tradition is, that Lord Fauconberg afterwards came to persecute him with hospitalities — of which Mr. Sterne was to complain whimsically to his friends. No one who had been intimidated into a favour, would be so forgiving.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

FASHIONABLE FOLLIES.

BEFORE this wonderful month of March was out, every day of which seemed to bring a new triumph for our clerical hero, he had been looking forward to the arrival of "dear, dear Kitty," in the metropolis. Within that short span scarcely any man had made such progress, and he was anxious she should have a nearer view of his dazzling apotheosis. She was expected in the first days of April, but wrote to say she could not come until the seventeenth or eighteenth, which made Mr. Sterne sad, "because it shortens the time I hoped to have stole in your company when you come." He then adds with some sentiment and more indifferent spelling: —"These separations, my dear Kitty, however grievous to us both, must be for the present. God," he adds, "will open a *Dore* when we shall sometime be more together."

He had been already thinking of setting out for Yorkshire, but could not resist staying for nearly five weeks more, in order to be present at a great pageant which was to come off in the second week in May. His patron, Lord Rockingham, and the

victor of Minden, Prince Ferdinand, who was now in London receiving ovations, were to be installed Knights of the Garter down at Windsor; and Mr. Sterne had been invited to go in the suite of Lord Rockingham. This distinction was too tempting to be resisted; so he had determined, nothing loth, as may be well conceived, to wait until the sixth. The flood of dinners had not even by that time spent its fury. He was actually keeping a sort of ledger in which his engagements were posted up. By the first of April he was bound for a fortnight in advance.

Many stories went round the town of his wit, his humour, and his repartees. It was told that the old Duke of Newcastle had said to him jocularly, "that men of genius were not fit for work." "I think," Yorick had replied, "that the truth is, they are *above* work. My Lord," he went on, "men may put any load upon a jackass, but a spirited creature is too good for such labour."*

By this time he knew the great Sir Joshua, and had sat to him. The result was a matchless portrait—a head, indeed, "such as Reynolds might have painted, mild, pale, and penetrating;" exquisitely characteristic and unconventional, and almost the best that master had done. Even in the rude vulgar copies to be found in the cheaper editions of his books, it was impossible to obscure the life, the quiet thoughtfulness, the hint of suppressed Shan-

* This, though taken from an old jest book—a very indifferent authority—has a certain characteristic air that looks like truth.

deism, that pervades the face. The attitude, so original and insignificant, is familiar to all; the sly thoughtful head, leaning upon the hand, whose forefinger is so significantly pointed. Altogether a grand portrait—one of the gems of Lansdowne House. Not yet have its delicate tones begun to fade, according to the fatal destiny which waits upon the Reynolds' gallery,—of which lamentable blight Mr. Sterne himself drops what seems like a curious prophecy. "I would not answer for my Aunt Dinah—*faith scarce for her picture, were it but painted by Reynolds.*" Well might he call him "that son of Apollo." It was already in the engraver's hands, and the result was to be a mezzotinto worthy of the painter, and one of the best of that matchless series which, at the end of the last century, streamed from the burins of M'Ardle, Smith, and many more. That art is now, unhappily, lost; and seems to have reached that development, as being the happiest medium for translating the exquisite delicacies of Reynolds. Well might Sterne write, that there was "a fine print going to be done of me. So I shall make the most of myself, and sell both inside and out." When the King of Denmark, Walpole's "puppet of an hour," was being lionized in London, the artists got up an exhibition of their choicest works. It was held in Spring Gardens: and Mr. Reynolds, choosing out four of his best pictures, placed this masterpiece —this "singularly fine portrait"—as Northcote calls it, on the list.

Something more substantial, however, than portraits or dinners might now naturally be expected. A brilliant prebendary with a host of friends, fashionable and political, might not unreasonably look for preferment. That he had promises, and was confident of success, there can be no question. He hints it mysteriously to Miss Fourmantelle, talking to her of his hope that "she would one day share in my great good fortune. *My fortunes will certainly be made;* but more of this when we meet." There is here a tone of secret exultation, a secret confidence that his promotion was made secure; and with some discretion—in this age, too, when those who had the appointment of ecclesiastical offices were not too nice in their selection—it is likely enough that Yorick would have been a dignitary. But that "lack of ballast," and the riot of London pleasures, were betraying him into what were, indeed, "follies of the head, not of the heart," but still no less fatal to his advancement. Already were his indiscretions becoming the talk of the town, and his name and books were being spoken of in the public journals with a strange irreverence and disrespect. The reaction was, in fact, setting in; and it must be admitted, he laid himself open to such remarks with a reckless perversion.

He was to be seen constantly at Ranelagh Gardens—a place, it need not be said, which the presence of a clergyman scarcely suited. And though its charms might give "an expansion and gay sensation" to the mind of Doctor Johnson, which he

never before experienced; there can be no doubt such "expansions" would be eminently perilous to the weaker moral sense of so flighty an ecclesiastic. Those "ridottos at guinea tickets, which included supper and music," and the *entrée* to "a vast amphitheatre, finely gilt and illuminated," with its balconies running round,—such as Horace Walpole saw it,—were dangerous snares. To the Soho entertainments of that questionable demirep, Mrs. Cornely's, he went later. He was to be seen at Drury Lane, where Garrick had given him a box, and there, the fashionable amateur, Mr. Cradock, was in the habit of meeting the clergyman behind the scenes. He knew the actors, and it must be owned, was on intimate terms with the actresses—even with that famous Kitty Clive, who acted with such sprightliness, and spelt so ill. For, some time after, she wrote one of her pert complaints to Mr. Garrick, concerning the stoppage of her salary, saying, that "your dislike to me is extraordinary as the reason you gave Mr. Sterne for it;" —a reason which Mr. Sterne must have imparted to Mrs. Clive. This braving of the world was almost too bold; and the town—at that time case-hardened enough, and more relaxed in its moral tone than ever it was at any time since Charles the Second's day—affected to be scandalised. We do not apologise for Sterne, but it is impossible not to consider those by whom the cry was raised; for the abandoned Sandwich was, about this time, the effete guardian of morals in the House, Warburton was

the meek apostle of tolerance, and Wilkes the accredited guardian of liberty.

He made no pretence of playing the Pharisee, or keeping his movements secret, even from the Yorkshire gossips. "I saw Mr. Cholmondeley to-night at Ranelagh," he wrote down to his friend Croft, in a letter full of news. Just as Miss Fourmantelle was starting for London, he acknowledges the receipt of a letter of hers, "which gave me much pleasure with some pain," just as he was going off to Ranelagh.

As to irregular "gentlemen of the gown," the town must have been tired of such scandals. There never was such licence among the shepherds of the flock; or such toleration in the flock for such shepherds. The example of the laity acted directly on the clergy, and that of the clergy reacted upon the laity. This joint influence bore with it an accumulating scandal. There were parsons, like the Rev. Horne Tooke, who flaunted abroad in gold lace and sky-blue and scarlet, and who apologized to Wilkes for having suffered "the infectious hand of a bishop to be waved over him—whose imposition, like the sop given to Judas, is only a signal for the devil to enter." There were Duelling Parsons, like the Rev. Mr. Bate, chaplain to a cavalry regiment, who "went out" and was killed in fair duel; "a most promising young man," said the papers with commiseration. There were the clergymen known pleasantly as "The Three Fighting Parsons"—Henley, Bate, and Churchill; and "Bruising"

clergymen—like the one mentioned in Mr. Grose's "Olio."

A few years later the story of the unfortunate Dodd was to be in every one's mouth; as well as that of the infatuated Hackman. Then the town, as it were, roused itself, and affected to be scandalised. Then was witnessed one of those periodical outbursts of morality—described so happily by Lord Macaulay—when the great Public becomes a Moloch of decency, and clamours for a victim. Twenty thousand persons, of all degrees, crowded to intercede for Dr. Dodd. The whole kingdom was moved; and it is believed that no criminal under sentence ever excited so universal an interest. But the grounds of this sympathy were curious. It was urged that it was an unseemly thing, and a grievous thing, that a clergyman should be led out to suffer on the public scaffold. The throne was beseiged. The King was pressed—with an importunity, too, never put forward for criminal before—to exert his prerogative of mercy, but, with a strange obstinacy, refused; and the unhappy man underwent his punishment.

There was a loud cry of grief and indignation. The Town was inexpressibly shocked. But the truth was, the Town itself was accountable for the scandal, and was only reaping what it had sown. On the heads of those who scoffed openly at sacred things, and helped to support a shameless tone of at best utter indifference—and a free, abandoned

tone of life and manners, utterly fatal to decency and virtue,—rested the whole disgrace of the spectacle. There was a universal corruption abroad, quietly acknowledged and, as it were, accepted—an idea of which can only be gathered from the letters, memoirs, and popular magazines of the day. Mr. Thackeray has said justly, that the effect left on rising from Selwyn's Memoirs—from the letters, from the stories whispered to each other by the crowd of dandies, maccaronies, and London men of pleasure, who jostle each other in every page—is as of something appalling. It was the tribe of "Gilly" Williams', the Lord March's, and "Fish" Crawfurd's, whose voices drowned those of good men and good pastors.

A little fact will illustrate this tone of manners.

We turn over a volume of the old *Town and Country Magazine*, a very popular periodical of that time, decorated with those quaint odd pictures called "*Têtes-à-têtes*"—pairs of little medallion portraits joined together by a ribbon. These were little historiettes of scandal—pictures of fashionable celebrities, with whose names the Town had been making very free. In this little gallery we find "The Maccaroni Parson," as he was called—Doctor Dodd—joined to a little medallion of a "Mrs. R——," and accompanied by some pages of a jocular commentary—half gossipy, half sarcastic—but without a word of censure or reproof. Ladies and gentlemen, both of Town and Country, bought their London magazine,

and were merry over the little clerical scandal.* Rarely do we meet an old-fashioned country house library, or an inn parlour, without this lively periodical and faithful index to the free-and-easy toleration of the day.

But in truth the history of the unhappy Dodd will be found to excuse his own follies, and utterly condemn his generation. The incidents of his life are but little known: readers are chiefly familiar with the ghastly features of its close. But it is worthy of all study: for we can follow him step by step from the beginning—from the fatal day when he first came from his innocent country cure to "lodgings in the Pall Mall"—whence he fell gradually into the round of city feasts, theatres, dinners, and general extravagance. No voice could be heard to warn, no hand was raised to protest. When the bands and cassocks were seen at Ranelagh, there was indeed the coarse joke, and the loud laugh of derision: but this was not the way to bring about a reform. His Pimlico chapel, where he delivered "sensation" sermons, was crowded with the gay

*Even the jests and "good stories" of the day show the same irreverence. Of which class was Lord Sandwich's bet about the twelve clergymen who were dining with him; all of whom he coarsely insisted would have corkscrews in their pockets but not one a Prayer-book. This was most likely only a profane joke, and utterly untrue; but it was significant of the tone of the day. So, too, with the allusions in the novels, and Feilding's Parson Trulliber and that "Ordinary of Newgate" who attended Mr. Wild at supper the evening before his execution, and considered a bowl of punch to be sanctioned by Holy Writ.

and fashionable, who knew well the stories that were afloat about him, and the truth of those stories. With such encouragement, a weak foolish nature—without strong principle—was sure to be shipwrecked. The tone of every profession must, more or less, for good or for evil, affect the separate members of that profession. And the tone of the profession is in the same way gradually influenced by the tone of the society outside it. This certainly is some extenuation for men like Doctor Dodd, and the Rev. Mr. Sterne, who had to pass through the same ordeal.*

The manly English writer who has just been snatched from us, found in this state of things a subject for his most vigorous handling; and some pages in the "Four Georges" are devoted to a bitter sketch of the clerical manners of that day. It is a tremendous picture. He holds up to us Selwyn's Doctor Warner; but it is only in Selwyn's History we can see all the lights and shadows, and general details of that disagreeable portrait. On such an ecclesiastical background Sterne's follies cannot stand out in very strong

* The Life of Dr. Dodd is itself a most singular history. The reader who is curious to know more about this unhappy divine may consult *The Dublin University Magazine* for March and April, 1863, where I have given it. For more general details in reference to this state of manners, I would refer the reader to the fencing-master, Angelo's, Memoirs—to Garrick's letters—to Walpole—who, however, was notoriously prejudiced against Bishops and Clergymen. One little fact is strangely significant of the moral temperature of the day. Lord Chesterfield actually imported 300 copies of Crébillon's infamous "Sofa," and sold them all at White's.

relief. His must be a well-trained, steady spirit, who can resist the prevailing demoralisation of a whole profession, or at least, not catch the low tone of his order. Nor am I yet prepared to put this forward as his justification, but more as some extenuation; for there were good standards as well as bad—encouragement for moral truth and virtue as well as for vice; and if the "Memoirs of a Rake" was asked for at the libraries, so also was Doctor Doddridge's "Expositor," with a cloud of devotional writings, and the stern moralities of the author of the "Rambler." Not that we may accept a taste for moral reading and wholesome sentiment as a test of moral conduct and virtuous life; as this is well known to be a curious inconsistency in human character,* and seems to be the answer to the argument, which has been pressed, perhaps a little too far; namely, as to the age relishing the soft beauties of Goldsmith, and the amiable virtues of the Pastor of Wakefield. The age, it is said, that produced "Tristram," brought forth also "The Deserted Village," and that perfect and entire chrysolite of romance—the story which we read both in youth and in age, and bless for so well reconciling us to human nature. But there are other merits in Goldsmith's "Vicar" beside its sweet and pure tone, and a charm beyond that of mere pastoral innocence—there is a surpassing

* Just as at the obscure places of entertainment known as "penny gaffs," where the audience is the worst and most suspicious class of human beings, the finest "sentiments" are welcomed vociferously

delicacy of touch, simplicity, warm geniality, marvellous Dutch painting, and perfect faith and truth —qualities which every age, however corrupted, will, more or less, appreciate. And how, after all, was this exquisite little pastoral welcomed? As Mr. Forster says, it only "silently forced its way. . . The *St. James' Chronicle* did not condescend to notice its appearance, and the *Monthly Review* confessed frankly that nothing was to be made of it." No doubt it eventually gained ground and passed through many editions before its author's death.

Just as Wilkes could read and enjoy these writings, and Sandwich relish a domestic evening and a little music, and Lord Le Despencer, the abandoned abbot of Medmenham, piously build a church, so it seemed to be with the public society of the day; whose life and behaviour was, after all, to be taken as the true exposition of their views.

With such an atmosphere about him, therefore, Sterne should not be judged too harshly. It was impossible for a careless, unsteady mind, such as his was—unaffected, too, by the least tinge of Puritanism—not to catch the free *débonnaire* tone which he saw everywhere. This, so far, has reference to the manners of the time, and, as has been insisted, is ground for indulgence in dealing with Mr. Sterne's levities. But when we come to consider the tone and indelicacies of "Tristram Shandy," there is room for greater excuse. The popular conception is, that this was a sudden and solitary outrage on

public decency—a thing conspicuous and *sui generis* —and that by its grossness it corrupted the age. But the truth is, a coarse indelicacy of speech and writing had long disfigured the conversation and practice of the men and women of the age, and readers of Fielding and Smollett will have discovered that a certain forcible indelicacy of phrase and allusion had become almost habitual, and even harmless from familiarity. But after the brutal *grossièretés* of Swift, does it not seem affectation to single out the author of "Tristram,"* in those sewers of literary corruption which the "great Dean" was not ashamed to flush for an eager public. Instances might be multiplied to show the habitual want of restraint in this respect; and in Swift's "Specimens of Polite Conversation," we have a characteristic instance of the way it broke out in every class of society. At the theatres they were acting Wycherly's and Mrs. Behn's plays; it will be seen from allusions in the public papers and magazines that young girls were allowed to carry "Tristram" about in their pockets; and Mr. Forster, in a curious chapter, has shown us how the pious Dr. Doddridge did not scruple to read over the "Wife of Bath," one of Prior's most indelicate tales, to young Miss Moore, and could laugh heartily at its humour.

* I hope it will not be supposed—either from partial or hasty reading of this portion of his memoir—that anything like an apology is offered here for Sterne's writings. He is open to the gravest censure, both as man and cleric. I have been merely dealing with the temptations and inducements which surrounded him.

Johnson went so far as to say that the same author was a "lady's book," and Goldsmith, always on the side of morals and virtue, actually included two gross pieces by the same hand in a sort of Speaker" which he compiled for a bookseller.*

* Forster's "Life of Goldsmith," page 243.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

MORE LONDON TRIUMPHS!

MEANWHILE Miss Fourmantelle had not yet arrived in London. She had written to Mr. Sterne to use his influence in some local direction, the exertion of which would appear to have failed. It is scarcely a refinement to say that an almost perceptible change of tone can be discovered in this letter. The whirl of festivity, the universal adulation, or possibly some other "Dulcinea," whose presence in Mr. Sterne's head was a perpetual necessity, had done its work. "Never, my dear girl, be dejected; something else will offer and turn out in another quarter. Thou mayst be assured, nothing in this world shall be wanting that I can *do with discretion.*" He then assured her that she will ever "find him the same man of honour and truth." This "protesting too much" is significant of a change. What was to be expected from the fashionable Yorick, who was to preach the following Sunday before the Judges, and who had just been listening to the Duke of York's ballad-singing?

In a few days "dear, dear Kitty" arrived in London, and took up her residence at Meard's Court, St.

Anne, Soho, and her presence there, it is to be feared, was rather a little drag and hindrance upon the clergyman's lively motions. He saw her of one Sunday afternoon; then, about the middle of the week, writes a hurried line saying he could not spare an hour or half an hour "if it would have saved my life," and that "every minute of this day and to-morrow is so pre-engaged, that I am as much a prisoner as if I was in gaol." He then lays out a possible meeting for Friday. Sunday until Friday! But a few weeks before he would "have given a guinea for a squeeze" of her hand, and was momentarily engaged in "sending out my soul" to see what she was about, and wishing he could send his body with it. Sunday until Friday! Still she was consoled with this comforting speech:—"I beg, dear girl, you will believe I do not spend an hour where I wish, for I wish to be with you always; but fate orders my steps, God knows how, for the present.—Adieu! Adieu!" The "fate" that ordered Mr. Sterne's steps so cruelly was a many-headed Ἀνάγκη, consisting of balls, parties, visits, dinners a fortnight deep, Ranelagh, and the Drury Lane *coulisses*.

This is our last glimpse of "dear, dear Kitty." The car of Mr. Sterne swept by her. Such *débris* do the heroes leave behind them in their passage. She drops out of view at this point. She was second in order of Mr. Sterne's violent attachments. Poor "dear, dear Kitty"!

There is no reason to doubt that it was of an

honourable sort. It is difficult, and not an agreeable duty, to weigh and appraise the marks and tokens of such a passion—not very justifiable under a strict conjugal code. But the devout appeals to his Maker; his sending his "service to your mamma;" his looking forward to a time when she might "so live and so love me, as one day to share in my great good fortune;" his "praying to God" that she might so love him;—these things seem to point in a direction comparatively innocent. It is hard to decide upon such matters after the fashion of a jury; they are here set before the reader, who can form his own conclusions.

Warburton, meanwhile, held to him firmly, nor was he likely to be daunted by public cries. Perhaps the opposition of the crowd roused his controversial spirit. He even went round the bench of bishops, and recommended the book heartily to their notice; what was more extraordinary, he recommended the author also, telling them "he was the English Rabelais." To be introduced in such a character to *ex-officio* spirituality, would seem an odd proceeding, unless, indeed, as Horace Walpole wickedly insinuates, "they had never heard of such a writer!" Again, it must be repeated, such encouragement does, indeed, take much of the blame from off the delinquent's shoulders, and looks very like an invitation to proceed with further instalments of his book.

There are some little trifles which show the strength of his popularity. There was a new game

of cards, called Tristram Shandy, introduced, in which "the knave of hearts, if hearts are trumps, is supreme, and nothing can resist his power;" which might, indeed, have been taken as symbolical of that clerical knave of hearts, who at this moment was himself "supreme." For epicures there was a new salad invented, and christened the "Shandy Salad." And, later on, at the Irish steeple chases, horses were entered bearing the name of "Tristram Shandy." These are but straws on the current; but they show how strong the current was. Another current—that of the dinners—flowed on with the old steadiness. Gray wrote that "one is invited to dinner where he dines, a fortnight beforehand," so that there was actually a double competition for the new lion; first, to secure his presence *at* a dinner, which was difficult when he himself was engaged fourteen deep; and then to be invited to the house where he was engaged to dine. To sustain this popularity and hold his own among the wits, he must have had special gifts of liveliness, and good conversation. There can be no question but that he imported a good deal of Shandyism into his conversation, which he afterwards almost matured into a system, so as to astound the French *noblesse*, and make them inquire—but not in such doubtful French—"Qui le diable est ce Chevalier Shandy?" When in special vein he would phrase it, "I Shandy it now more than ever."

That his London conversation took the shape of a pleasant tone of burlesque and grotesque exag-

geration, always amusing if skilfully handled, seems likely from a sort of photograph of one of these London dinners which has been preserved, and its truth being acknowledged by Mr. Sterne, it becomes highly characteristic as a reported specimen of his talk.

He was dining at a fashionable house, where a certain self-sufficient physician chanced to be of the party, and engrossed the whole conversation, giving it a medical turn, and discoursing profoundly of "phrenitis," and "paraphrenitis," to the great annoyance of host and company. Mr. Yorick, seeing the turn matters were taking, and that the entertainment was likely to be shipwrecked by this pedantry, at once struck in, as it were, in the same key, and began to give an account of a recent malady from which he had suffered acutely. It was a cold, he said, which he had caught originally by *leaning on* a damp cushion,—the various stages and aggravations of which he proceeded to detail gravely, and with a happy parodying of the cant terms the professional gentleman had been dealing. He related how "after sneezing and snivelling a fortnight, it fell upon my breast. How they blooded and blistered me!" But, somehow, he grew steadily worse, for "I was *treated according to the exact rules of the college.* In short, it came eventually to *an adhesion*, and all was over with me." In this desperate case an ingenious idea suggested itself. "I bought a pole," continued Yorick, with due gravity, "and began leaping over the

country." Whenever he came to a ditch, he, by long practice, contrived to fall exactly *across the ridge of it upon the side* opposite to the adhesion. "*This tore* it off at once. Now I am as you see. Come, let us fill to the success of this system." Thus pleasantly was extinguished the intrusive physician.

This story is very characteristic. It went round the clubs, and got into the papers. The host was given out to be "the amiable Charles Stanhope," and the physician Dr. Mounsey, and with these names it fluttered down to York. But this was a mistake, rather an invention of the notorious Doctor Hill—"Bardana" Hill—who was the first to set the story afloat in his *Inspector*. He had a grudge against Mounsey, whom he at once cast for the part of the pedant.

Altogether, there can be no question that Mr. Sterne was far too "gay" for one of his cloth. But the indiscretion falls with more propriety on those who beset his path, and besieged him with fashionable temptation—with Ranelagh, and the "holy society at Arthur's," as it was called in one of the magazines; and the *coulisses* of Garrick's theatre, which the stern moralist, Johnson, gave up frequenting, as it tried his rigorous principles too severely. The famous brewer, Thrale, might exclaim despairingly on his deathbed, "Leave London! Lose my Ranelagh season!" but it would have been more discreet in a clergyman to have been moderate in these amusements.

There was at this time a very gay prince of the royal family, who had a marvellous taste for social amusement, and who eagerly mixed in all the leading circles of the town. In fact, it was remarked of the royal family generally, this year that Mr. Sterne came to London, that "all the world lives with them, and they with all the world. Princes and princesses open shop in every corner of the town, and all the world deals with them." But the leading Sybarite was Prince Edward, afterwards Duke of York. He delighted in balls, supper-parties, and music, and was to die in a few years in a foreign country, of over-dancing at a Marseilles ball. In London he would get the nobility to give supper-parties, at which he would stay until three in the morning.

To this royal votary of amusement was Mr. Sterne presented. Though comparatively a cheap distinction in London, it was of importance enough to be written down into Yorkshire. Mr. Sterne saw him at private concerts, where the Prince performed publicly on "the bass viol." This, it will be recollected, was also an accomplishment of Mr. Sterne's —so here was a bond of sympathy. With his usual good-fortune, Mr. Sterne made an impression, and "received great notice" from him. He was even invited to sup with him. He must have known Foote at this time (he was to meet him at Paris later). For he knew Foote's friend, the odd Doctor Kennedy, who frequented playhouses professionally as it were, and had himself fetched out by hurried

lacqueys, just as the more famous medical student of romance, Mr. Sawyer, had himself called out of church.*

In short, this London campaign was one of the most brilliant ever fought by successful man of letters.

* Angelo's Letters.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

THE PURSE OF GOLD.

Some little trouble of a provoking sort was he now to know. The path of Yorick was not to be always over the smooth-mown lawns and plaisaunces of fashion. There was at this time in London a certain notorious Doctor Hill—a strange and versatile quack, whose name, eyes that glanced over the *London Chronicle* or *Evening Post*, were sure to light on in a corner. The "Elixir of Bardana," and the "Essence of Water-dock, in bottles, 3*s*. each, sealed and signed by the author," had made his name quite as famous as that of more modern advertising charlatans. He had also rushed into print; had interchanged epigrams with Garrick; and had a savage wrangle with the Royal Society. He added to the ranks of the magazines, whose name was already legion; and directed the *Inspector* and *Royal Female Magazine*. "For dulness," said Warburton, bitterly, in allusion to this last, "who often has as great a hand as the devil in deforming God's works of the creation, has made *them*, it seems, *male* and *female*." And in the *Royal Female Magazine* for May the first, appeared a strange paper—a pho-

tograph of the fashionable clergyman—outrageously personal, and laughably flattering, a curious yarn of truth and falsehood commingled. This has been already alluded to; and it comprised all the biographical scraps in reference to Yorick's past life, habits, manners, tastes, and appearance. The panegyric was, indeed, daubed on heavily. It was written in the worst dialect of what would now be called "flunkeyism." It was copied into the *London Chronicle*, and the *London Magazine*, and was tuned in this key. "The subject," it began, was both "a favourite and fashionable one. Yorick is a gentleman, a clergyman, and a man of learning—singular in the highest degree, for he has an infinite share of wit and goodness." He is stated to be "a native of the field of war, and to add to the whimsicality, born in the barracks of Dublin." When his famous book made its appearance, he disdained to practise any of "those common arts" by which "a book is pushed. A parcel is merely sent up from the country;" and, what must have been a fatal oversight in the eyes of the patentee of "Water-dock," it was "scarce advertised." "They have made their author's way *to the tables of the first people in the kingdom*, and to the friendship of Mr. Garrick. Fools," it goes on to say, "tremble at the allusions that may be made from the present volumes. Forty people have assumed to themselves the ridiculous titles in these volumes."

It then dwells on the "extreme candour and modesty of his temper." "A vain man would be

exalted at these attentions. He sees them in another light." It then gives a couple of Yorick's remarks, which were then going round; how Mr. Sterne used to say, pleasantly, that "he was like a fashionable mistress, whom everybody courted because he happened to be the fashion" (a figure quite in keeping with the colour of the times). And again, this "singular creature" said to a friend who paid him a compliment on his great benevolence,—"I am an odd fellow, and if you hear any good of me, doctor, don't believe it."

More serious, however, was a fresh statement of that vulgar rumour, which had been to Mr. Sterne "for all the world like a cut across my finger with a sharp penknife," but which, in its present broader shape, must have affected his sensibility far more acutely. "*And it is scarce to be credited whose liberal purse has bought off the dread of a tutor's character* in those (volumes) which are to come." This was the old club story revived—that story of Tristram's episcopal tutor, with a little seasoning of corruption added.

It has been mentioned how triumphantly he wrote to "dear Kitty," that "I had a purse of guineas given me yesterday by a bishop," when he had been only two or three weeks in town. So odd and exceptional a present, coming from so sensitive a being as the new Bishop of Gloucester, would in itself be quite sufficient to cause such a rumour; for the spectacle of a fierce prelate presenting the clerical author of a free book—a second portion of

which free book was to appear later—with so suspicious a douceur as a purse of money, might of itself set scandalous tongues in motion.

The whole town seems to have had this story. The purse of gold turns up in all directions. Walpole wrote of it to Florence; it was alluded to in newspaper paragraphs. But the quack doctor's magazine had travelled down to York, was read there greedily, and very speedily a good-natured report was going round their little *coteries*, that Mr. Sterne himself had written or inspired the whole. This was quite characteristic. What specially affected them was a paragraph relating to a piece of local generosity on the part of the Vicar of Sutton—ushered in by some outrageous compliments. "Everybody is eager to see the author, and when they see him, everybody loves the man. When Lord Falconberg gave him the new benefice he found that his predecessor had left behind him a wife and family in great distress. The generous Yorick presented her with £100 in hand, and promised a pension for her life."

His friends, the Crofts, watchful in his absence, wrote to him of the rumour, and of how the Yorkshire Mrs. Candours were circulating that he had furnished all the details of that complacent sketch. He wrote back an indignant denial almost the instant he received it. No wonder he should marvel at the uncharitableness of the York people, who could "suppose any man so gross a beast as to pen such a character of himself." Such a tissue of wild

stories only "shows the absurdity of York credulity and nonsense." The best refutation, however, was in the blunders and mistakes—"falsehoods" he calls them—in reference to that "whimsicality" of his birth "in the barracks of Dublin," which event, as we have seen, occurred at Clonmel; and more particularly in reference to that showy act of generosity, the "hundred pounds" and pension to the widow of his predecessor—a charity quite beyond the measure of Yorick's purse.

He takes up the story of the purse of gold, and says, that "in this great town no one ever suspected it, for a thousand reasons," and refutes it by three arguments: the improbability of his "falling foul of Dr. Warburton, my best friend," by representing him so weak a man, or "of telling such a lie of him as his giving me a purse to buy off his tutorship for Tristram;" or lastly, "that I should be fool enough to own I had taken his purse for such a purpose."* The last was, perhaps, the weightiest argument of the three.

It seems a suspicious or, at least, a mysterious transaction. A rough, haughty prelate, notorious for his rude procedure in the ordinary relations of literature or society, sends to a Yorkshire parson—whom he has never seen, and who has written an odd book—the very eastern present of a purse of

* Most writers—even Mr. Watson, in his new Life of Bishop Warburton—have assumed that there is here a complete denial of the purse-of-gold story, and to a careless reader such would appear to be the view of the sentence; but Sterne merely denies the supposed motive for receiving the purse.

gold. So improbable seemed the story, that every one who has hitherto noticed it, has assumed it to be an idle town story. Such an act did not seem likely to be a mere gratuitous expression of admiration, and might reasonably be imputed to a wish to propitiate favour and even purchase silence. A strange letter which I have discovered in an obscure magazine, and which was written long after the death of all the parties concerned, seems to throw light on this curious subject.* A friend of Sterne, who writes in the manner of an old man, wishes to set right some misconceptions about the life of the humourist, and then enters on this purse-of-gold story.

He had met his friend in London in the first flush of his triumph, and they had been talking over the fashion in which Tristram's eccentric adventures were to be continued. The friend suggested an odd conceit which he had been turning over in his mind. He had thought of an allegory on the Book of Job—a sort of convention of polemic divines, who were to meet at Shandy Hall and discuss a system for Tristram's education. Three divines were to be introduced—sketched from life—to play the part of the comforters, namely, Gray, Peters, and Chapelow. An Irish bishop, whom Sterne knew well in London, and "who loves dearly to be in a crowd," was to intrude himself uninvited.

* See *European Magazine*. It has a value beyond that attaching to ordinary anonymous magazine publications, because vouched for by the editor.

Warburton was also to be present, in the character of the Evil Spirit who smote Job from head to foot. The Irish bishop and the theologians were to fall on the Evil Spirit, and Uncle Toby and Trim were to make him the object of the same class of commentary from which Doctor Slop had suffered so severely. Sterne was delighted with the suggestion; and in his hands the scene could have been worked into something very piquant and Shandean. It quite falls in with the character of his book. He was so pleased, indeed, that he told the proposed scheme to many of his friends. And thus it was that the rumour drifted to the ears of the bishop.

Such is the story—which has an air of probability. If true, it accounts satisfactorily for the whole transaction. Naturally Warburton, but newly transferred into a bishop, would have shrunk from the ridicule of such a satire; and the ridiculous portrait of Slop, read and laughed over by the whole kingdom, warned him how effective would be his portrait in such hands.

Whether we accept or reject this little narrative, the whole story makes a most curious subject for speculation.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

REVIEWS AND REVIEWERS.

THE reviewers had now begun to deal with the book. The Critical Reviewers recommended it to the public "as a work of humour and ingenuity." The Monthly Reviewers do not appear to have dealt with it at all, and the *London Chronicle*, and other journals, noticed it with a disfavour or commendation, pretty impartially divided. It was not until much later that they opened on him without mercy, and turned all such fiercer sarcasm as their force could supply upon the succeeding issues of "Shandy;" so that it was no wonder, when wishing to convey an idea of "an act of humiliation" done to a sermon, he should employ the artful image of its being "twisted round with a half-sheet of dirty blue paper, which *seems to have been once the cast cover of a general review*, which to this day smells horribly of horse drugs." One of these hostile reviews was conducted by a certain doctor, who wrote novels, whom he christened Smelfungus—and who suggested horse drugs.

But the sharpest shaft of all, because the wittiest, was to flutter out of the obscurity of Green Arbour Court; and the *Citizen of the World*, in the *Public*

Ledger, was to enter his protest against this prodigious popularity. That protest is likely to do Mr. Sterne's book more mischief now than it did then; for the journal in which it appeared was but a journal newly started, and the writer of these delightful essays had no higher authority than what the reading public would allow to one of Mr. Griffith's hacks. When this pleasantry was slyly directed against the mere tricks and eccentricities of Mr. Sterne's manner, it was well founded; but that lack of appreciation of his genuine gifts, his pathos, and his humour, of his gallery of original men and women, seems incomprehensible in one of Goldsmith's nature. The judgment passed some years later upon Sterne's social merits—"and a very dull fellow"—would seem to have been his settled opinion of his literary gifts also. "The humour and wit," says Mr. Forster, "ought surely to have been admitted; and if the wisdom and charity of my Uncle Toby, a Mr. Shandy, or a Corporal Trim, might anywhere have claimed frank and immediate recognition, it should have been in that series of essays which Beau Tibbs and the Man in Black have helped to make immortal." These distates are as incomprehensible as Shylock's list of physical repulsions. Doctor Johnston, Goldsmith's friend, could not endure a line of Gray's fine odes.

"'Bless me,' says the Bookseller—in this light airy bit of trifling—to the Chinese traveller, 'now you speak of an epic poem, you shall see an excellent farce. Here it is. Dip into it where you will,

it will be found replete with true modern humour. Strokes, sir; it is filled with strokes of wit and satire in every line.' '*Do you call these dashes of the pen, strokes?*' replied I; '*for I must confess I see no other.*' 'And pray, sir,' returned he, 'what do you call them? . . Sir, a well-placed dash makes half the wit of our writers of modern humour. I bought last season a piece that had no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy-two ha-ha's, and three good things.'" This was excellent fooling. But in a week or two the Chinese citizen comes back to the subject, and strikes heavily, and in all seriousness, at the Reverend Mr. Sterne. It is almost the only instance in the gay and good-humoured letters where he seems to grow warm and heated in his onslaught. He inveighs with justice against the freedoms and improprieties which disfigured "Tristram," but for which it was scarcely fair to pillory Mr. Sterne singly; for it is admitted, that "this manner of writing is perfectly adapted to the taste of gentlemen and ladies of fashion here." He remarks how "very difficult it is for a dunce to obtain the reputation of a wit;" yet, "by the assistance of this freedom, this may be easily effected, and a licentious blockhead often passes for a fellow of smart parts and pretensions; every object in nature helps the jokes forward, without scarce any effort of the imagination."* A severe but

* "If a lady stands, something very good may be said upon that; if she happens to fall, with the help of a little fashionable pruriency,

just criticism, and admirably hitting off the secret of the worst portions of "Tristram."

With more severity still, he dwells on the toleration with which "Tristram" was received by the female portion of the community. He wonders at their so "bravely throwing off their prejudices;" and not only "applauding," but, what was far more serious, actually introducing this free tone into their conversation. "Yet so it is, the pretty innocents now carry those books openly in their hands which formerly were laid under the cushion." They are even heard "to lisp their double meanings with grace." If this was indeed the tone of society, it is scarcely to be believed that Mr. Sterne's book was wholly accountable for it.

Goldsmith was at this time smarting under a neglect but little creditable to the age. His bitterness is scarcely surprising; and had the words that follow appeared in a more influential organ than the *Public Ledger*, they would have caused Mr. Sterne much annoyance and vexation. "However," Goldsmith goes on: "Though this figure is so much in fashion, though professors of it

there are forty sly things ready for the occasion." We have purposely finished this criticism in a note; but it is very strange that Goldsmith himself should have been so forgetful of his censure as to have elsewhere introduced this incident of the lady "happening to fall," and, what is worse, seizing the occasion to introduce one of those "forty sly things." (See Letter 78.) A more curious instance of inconsistent moral criticism is not on record. It has not been remarked, that in these "Chinese Letters" there are some coarse blemishes, which show that even this pure writer could not escape the universal contagion of the time.

are so much caressed by the great, *those perfect judges of literary excellence;* yet, it is confessed to be only a revival of what was once fashionable here before." He alludes to "the gentle Tom Durfey, whose works were once the subject of polite—I mean very polite—conversation." "There are several very dull fellows, who, by a few mechanical helps, sometimes learn to become extremely brilliant and pleasing. . . . . By imitating a cat, or a sow and pigs; by a loud laugh and a slap on the shoulder, *the most ignorant are furnished out* for conversation. But, as the writer finds it impossible to throw his winks, his shrugs, or his attitudes upon paper, he may borrow some assistance, *indeed, by printing his face at the title-page.*" He then falls into a happy burlesque of Mr. Sterne's manner:—"The reader must be treated with the most perfect familiarity; in one page the author is to make them a low bow, and in the next *to pull them by the nose.* . . . . He must speak of himself, and his chapters, and his manner, and what he would be at, and his own importance, *and his mother's importance,* with the most unpitying prolixity, now and then testifying his contempt for all but himself; —smiling, without a jest; and without wit, possessing vivacity."

It was not often gentle "Goldy" grew so warm, or, it must be said, so undiscriminating. Was it that, besides his own indifferent opinion of the book, he suspected its reputation had been made by that cheap process by which he believed repu-

tations were at that time manufactured in England? "A great man says at his table that such a book *is no bad thing.* Immediately this praise is carried off by five flatterers, to be dispersed at twelve coffee-houses, from whence it circulates, improving as it proceeds, through fifty-five houses, where cheaper liquors are sold; from thence it is carried away by the honest tradesman to his own fireside."

Whatever was the obliquity that denied merit to Sterne, posterity, which made a tardy reparation to Goldsmith, and has accepted with delight his most careless thoughts, and even set up a statue to him in the open street—an honour rarely paid to poet—has certainly not indorsed his harsh criticism of Sterne; nor could the age take to itself the excuse of having been found chaste by Mr. Sterne, and of being corrupted by "Tristram Shandy." In fact, there was in his day a peculiar licence and personality of speech, a roughness of wit and jest, and bitterness of tongue, regulated by no restraint or conventionality, which has rarely been equalled in English society. This gave the tone, and made itself felt, even at the expense of all moral decorum.*

In Dublin, the new Book enjoyed a vast popularity. It was at once reprinted by that notable publishing privateer, George Faulkner, who praised it up extravagantly. Mrs. Sandford was turning over the books one day in his shop, and was near

* See that most amusing miscellany, "The New Foundling Hospital for Wit," compared with which the political satire in our modern Charivaris sounds very feeble.

buying it and bringing it down to Mrs. Delany at Delville. "We were on the brink of having it read among us," says that pleasant lady, with a devout horror. "D. D." was "not a little offended" with the author, but still, the report of the Delville coterie on the Irish run of the book is, that "it seems to divert more than it offends;" which is quite characteristic of the country. In Dublin there were actually cheap copies, on inferior paper, selling at sixpence—to the great injury of the regular pirates, who were aggrieved by this invasion of their *quasi* copyright, and protested loudly.

The Florentine legation, kept *au courant* with all that was new or fashionable in London life by regular advices from Arlington Street, learnt that in the next case of books there was to be "a fashionable thing, called 'Tristram Shandy.'" But the real opinion of the witty letter-writer was sent to Sir D. Dalrymple, who, at Edinburgh, was almost as removed from town-talk as Sir Horace Mann was at Florence. "At present," he writes, on the 4th of April, "nothing is talked of, nothing admired, but what I cannot help calling *a very insipid and tedious performance;* whose *chief* merit," he says, consists in "going backwards." It made him smile "two or three times at the beginning," but, by way of compensation, "makes one yawn for two hours." The characters are "*tolerably* well kept up," but the "wit is for ever *attempted and missed.*" In the very letter which contains this profound criticism, is to be found an

extravagant eulogy of a piece of correct dullness, called "The Siege of Aquileia," by Home, who is described as having "a beautiful talent for painting general nature." Which of the two was the "very insipid and tedious performance" the world has by this time happily determined. But his testimony that "nothing is talked of, nothing admired," but this famous book, is valuable, for no one knew so well what was genuinely admired or talked of in London circles.

The newspapers began to be filled with scarcely disguised allusions to the "Reverend Mr. S——e;" alluding to him in a bold strain of personality rarely paralleled. Even Mr. Urban, from St. John's Gate-way, launched this little squib:—

"Tho' in fashion he's grown,
'Tis very well known,
His merit is small as it can be,
The woman of pleasure,
And Rochester's treasure,
Are brother and sister to Shandy.

"'Sure a virgin may read,
As well as her creed,
What a Preb'ndary writes—and may stand by;'
Was an answer so pert
From a girl grown alert
By reading his 'Tristram Shandy.'

"'Tis a new kind of wit,
That some fancies may hit,
And melts in the mouth like a candy;
It perplexes and pleases,
With expecting it teases,
And they're left in the lurch by a Shandy."

More bitter and outrageously personal was what

the public read in another of the monthly periodicals, but which went the round of the evening papers. It was entitled "An Admonitory Epistle to the Reverend Tristram Shandy, A.M., P.Y., V.S., and S."

It began complimentary:—

"True Tristram Shandy, who can but admire
Your humour or wit,
Which conspire
To make your readers all on fire,
Or to expire
In a laughing fit.
* * * *
Your humour
Is like an ulcer or tumour.
* * * * *
I wish you were *both modester and fatter!*

"Who besides you could think of such a whim,
A sermon preached by Corporal Trim?
'Tis true a corporal's preaching is not quite so odd
A vagary,
As licence from a man of God,
Or novels from a Prebendary!

"But mum!
'Tis all a hum;
My friends you are fairly taken in,
Like rats in a gin.
* * * * * *

"Just so our ambidextrous priest,
On guests to taste of his *religious* feast,
Threw out a prefatory smutty tale,
Which answered well;
His readers trusting to their smell,
Hoped to see sermons made a farce on
By a rank parson.

"But whip—he slips on his religious skin,
*See, in the frontispiece he smiles,**
To find you taken by his wiles;

* This little squib was published after the appearance of the Sermons: which were adorned with the author's portrait.

His pockets filled, his sermons read,
Ah, Tristy, you've a cunning head!"
* * * * *

Methodism, and even in higher circles a sort of polite quietism, was at this time a sort of popular craze; and Mr. Whitfield was preaching to enormous crowds. A sort of invective, drawn up in what might be called the pure Methodist dialect, was put into the shape of a shilling pamphlet, and was actually attributed to the Rev. George Whitfield. It was extravagant enough to support such a theory, but a glance shows that it is merely a burlesque. It is headed without disguise. "A genuine Letter from a Methodist Preacher in the Country to Laurence Sterne, A.M., Prebendary of York," with the motto, "Evil communication corrupts good manners." This being taken by the button after this public fashion must have chafed Mr. Sterne sorely. No wonder he wrote, "the scribblers use me ill"—and they used him ill even beyond scribblers' licence. Said the Methodist preacher, "Tristram is a book penned by *the devil* himself. I never heard of a saint writing a bad novel. 'Tis true that many pastors of your Church have done it as well as yourself, but the pastors have long since erred and strayed like lost sheep. 'Tis an old proverb, but a very true one, 'that one scabby sheep spoils a whole flock.' *O Sterne,*" continues this polite Methodist, "thou *art scabby!* Sterne—for brother I cannot call thee—apostate Sterne, thy worldly practices have rendered thee unsound. We have no hope that thou

wilt put off the old man. By the old man, I mean Yorick, a name that Shakespeare or the devil must have profanely put in thy head. *The nobility and gentry* have likewise been led astray by the same evil spirit—they have encouraged thee . . . . It shall *pick* thy vital pockets, as thou *hast picked the pockets* of all the nobility and gentry. Thou shalt no longer yield to the temptations of the flesh *at Ranelagh.* Thou hast studied profane plays more than the word of God, and *thy text is generally taken from the writings of Shakespeare*, Sterne, forsake the paths that lead unto Ranelagh, and walk no more in St. James's Park." The writer then adds, that he has hopes of his conversion, because "I can discover some principles of Methodism in thy writings. Pray then for the new birth, and there will be no occasion for winding up a clock." At the close, he begs of all pious people to join with him in prayer "for the soul of the Prebendary of York."

When Mr. Sterne wished that they would write a hundred shilling pamphlets against him, he could scarcely have counted on such personal attacks. It almost amounted to a persecution. Later, in the *St. James's Magazine,* the same lay was taken up in a doggerel called "The Chaplain."

"Hey, presto! let him try thy magic spell.
Facetious Sterne! Four stars do just as well.
* * * * * *
A blank leaf stops us in our full career—
Those hooks and crooks—'tis wondrous smart I swear!
Those happy strokes, tho' pedant taste derides,
Those strokes made G——'s Prelate shake his sides!"

Again, in "An Epistle on the Death of Tristram Shandy," the writer will turn for comfort to the facetious volume—

> "Careless though prudery or dullness rail,
> Where Gloucester's Prelate laughs why may not I?"

A portrait which appeared in the same journal, and which was unflattering enough. From *Newbery's Public Ledger*, where Goldsmith was already in ambuscade, was to come a shower of buffets, half serious, half bantering. Mr. Sterne read these imaginary letters from Tristram Shandy to one "Bob Busby," and replies from "Ebenezer Plaincloth, a scandalized Quaker," in which the very incidents of his private life were touched on without circumlocution or delicacy. "If omens," said this pasquinade, "are of any consequence, the bets are confoundedly at my side; but a coronet, or at *least a mitre*, will fall to Tristram's share." This shows what rumours were afloat as to the promotion in store for the fashionable Prebendary.

Tristram's christening is then spoken of; and for that festival cards are to be sent out "which will have a pretty sound at the Mount Coffee House," where, later, Mr. Sterne wrote a certain letter upon gilt-edged paper.

This frequenting Ranelagh seems to have taken a prodigious hold of the public mind. It is alluded to openly and broadly. There was actually a shilling pamphlet sold with this title, "Tristram Shandy at Ranelagh." But the tide of squibs, pamphlets, and books of more responsible shape,

called forth by "Tristram," makes up a formidable catalogue. "There is a shilling pamphlet wrote against 'Tristram,'" he said, in a letter to his friend Croft; "I wish they would write a hundred such." Before long his wish was gratified almost to that extent. There was "The Clockmaker's Outcry against the Author of the 'Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,'" dedicated significantly "to the most humble of Christian prelates," a plain allusion to Warburton's patronage, and which was a humorous protest against the mischief done by "Tristram." "The directions," complains the Clockmaker, "I had for making clocks in the country are now countermanded, because no modest lady can allude to such articles. . . . Alas, many respectable clocks that have flourished for ages, are ordered to be taken down by virtuous matrons!" A Doctor Carr wrote a feeble book, which was actually published, as the third volume, in corresponding type and shape—a piece of bookselling effrontery scarcely matched. It took in a few. There were also "Explanatory Remarks on 'Tristram Shandy,' by Jeremiah Kunastrokius, M.D.;" "Yorick's Meditations;" "Life and Adventures of Sukey Shandy;" "Tristram Shandy in a Reverie;" "Yorick's Skull;" "A Shandean Essay;" "A Supplement to the 'Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy;'" "An Answer to the Clockmaker's Outcry;" "The Litera Infernalis, or Poor Yorick;" "The Life and Amours of Hafen Slaukenbergius;" and many more in the same key.

By some of these true catchpennies the notable Critical reviewers were quite taken in. Of one they say gravely, "this in any other hands but Yorick's would prove an insipid medley. . . . In his it is humorous, pleasant, and truly laughable, the *spirit of Swift breathes through the whole.*" In noticing the "Explanatory Remarks" of Dr. Kunastrokius, the reviewers make a scarcely warrantable insinuation: "to own the truth, we harbour some suspicion that the author is here himself giving breath to the trumpet of fame," and, under the form of explanatory notices, pointing the finger at some of these "latent strokes of wit, which may perhaps have escaped the eye of the less discerning reader." One of the characters hints that the genuine book is "a complete system of modern politics." The siege of Namur plainly alluded to that of Fort Philip in Minorca, and the wound of my Uncle Toby was but an ingenious figure for the distress of the empire at that calamity. There came out, too, "The Life and Amours of Sukey Shandy;" "Miss C——y's Cabinet of Curiosities, or the Green Room broke open, by Tristram Shandy, Gent.;" which was printed at "Utopia," by William Whirligig. There was also "A Letter from a Son of Comus to the Author of 'Tristram Shandy;'" "A Shandean Essay on the Human Passions;" and many more, all touching the same string.

The idea was, in fact, hunted to the death. In the wake of the racy original struggled a whole procession of the "tribe of servile imitators," weak,

feeble, insipid things, whose life was scarcely an hour long. This mimicry is some of that homage which mediocrity must pay to genius; and no one knew so well as the Citizen of the World, who was profoundly acquainted with the gales and currents of the publishing trade, what was the law of this curious craze for imitations. "It was usual," he said, "when a book had given universal pleasure upon one subject," to bring out several more upon the same plan. "The first performance serves rather to awake than satisfy attention . . . and no other subject can be relished until that is exhausted."

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

YORICK'S SERMONS.

ALL this time, while being feasted and fêted, and "hurried off his legs by going to great people," he had contrived to snatch a few moments for serious business. A new edition of "Tristram" was being sent through the press—no very heavy labour, certainly—and on an April morning the readers of the *Public Advertiser* saw under their eyes that—

"THIS DAY is published, dedicated to the Right Hon. Mr. Pitt, with a Frontispiece by Hogarth, in two volumes, price 5*s*., sewed, THE SECOND EDITION of 'The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman.'

"Speedily will be published the SERMONS of Mr. Yorick."

The new "Tristram" edition had thus two additional attractions—the dedication to Mr. Pitt, and the plate by Hogarth. The book, indeed, had already a buffooning sort of dedication, addressed to no one specially; but that was written down at York. Up in London it was different; the successful author, the rising cleric, the friend of statesmen, and *protégé* of bishops, would be ill advised to

neglect this mode of increasing his social capital. Wise in his generation, as he fancied, he selected for his dedicatee the great patriot minister—his own friends no doubt pointing eagerly in that direction; and he one day writes from Mr. Dodsley's shop, the following note, which the great commoner thought worthy of being put by among his papers—at least had not doomed to immediate destruction:—

"Friday,
"Mr. Dodsley's,
"Pall Mall."

(Publisher and author, it has been seen, were but a few doors from each other.)

"Sir,—Though I have no suspicion that the enclosed dedication can offend you, yet I thought it my duty to take some method of letting you see it, before I presumed to beg the honour of presenting it to you next week with the 'Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy.'

"I am, sir,
"Your most humble servant,
"Law. Sterne."

This second edition barely stayed the public appetite, for it was exhausted in little more than three weeks.

For this new edition and the two volumes of sermons,* it was given out that he received from

* Walpole says "and two more volumes," which could scarcely refer to two new unwritten Shandys.

Dodsley the publisher no less a sum than £650. This amount—which Walpole heard in town, and wrote to his friends, and which has since been repeated by many biographers—is a mistake.

The original agreement, dated May 19th, was to be seen a few years ago,* and it set out that for the new editions of "Tristram," and the two volumes of sermons, he was to receive £480: a sum, considering they were mere pocket volumes, widely printed, with dashes, breaks, and other typographical spasms, was a handsome *honorarium;* and yet not altogether so prodigious, considering what Doctor Goldsmith had just received for his "Chinese Letters," then enjoying but a mild popularity. To Garrick he appears to have been indebted for this arrangement, who all through seems to have proved a fast, active, and useful friend. Not too exaggerated was that public apostrophe with which he addressed him a few months later:—"My dear friend Garrick, whom I have so much cause to esteem and honour (why or wherefore 'tis no matter)"—a character which any one, who no more than glances over that crude quarto mass in which his correspondence has been entombed, must heartily endorse; for out of a cloud of business, wrangling, expostulation, sensitiveness, and vituperation, his character stands out with wonderful credit.

May came round, and in the second week of that

* It was sold, some twenty years back, by Evans, in Pall Mall, with many more of Dodsley's papers.

month was the splendid installation at Windsor. Prince Ferdinand, with his wreath of Minden laurels still blooming, and the Marquis of Rockingham, a Yorkshire nobleman, were to receive the Garter. The ceremony took place on Tuesday the 6th, and on the Monday they set out, the latter nobleman with "a grand retinue." Mr. Sterne was part of this "suit," most likely in the capacity of chaplain. The dinner alone for this solemnity cost £1,400, being contracted for by some "general undertaker," of which his Majesty, with that pettiness which distinguished some royal transactions about these early Hanoverian times, would only be responsible to the amount of £400. This little trait of shabbiness Mr. Sterne wrote down to his Yorkshire friends.

The "Sermons" were now being eagerly looked for—that sermon which Corporal Trim read and commented on so admirably, and which had been preached before the "judges of assize," had struck the public fancy. "The best thing in it," wrote Walpole, "is a sermon;" and there was a large class of the "serious" who bought the "hundred very wise, learned, well-intended productions, that have no charms for me," as Goldsmith put it. But there were many more who, like that witty writer, could never find "courage or grace enough to wade above two pages deep into 'Thoughts upon God and Nature,' or 'Thoughts upon Providence,' or 'Thoughts upon Free Grace,' or, indeed, into thoughts upon anything at all;" for it was such

dreary titles that met the eye in public advertisements. But a sermon so odd and sensational as that delivered before a Shandy congregation might well excite a desire for more. A publisher like Dodsley was not one to let so good an opening pass by, and a selection from Mr. Sterne's "Village Sermons" was already at press, with the second edition of "Tristram."

On Thursday, the 22nd of May, there was to be read in the *Public Advertiser*, this very singular notice: "THIS DAY is published, in two volumes, price, sewed, 5*s*. (with a portrait of *the Editor*, engraved from a painting by Mr. Reynolds), *The Sermons of Mr. Yorick*, published by the Rev. Mr. Sterne, Prebendary of York. Printed for J. Dodsley."

It will be remarked, what a Shandean jumble is here of Yorick and Sterne; and some have leant on him very severely for what they considered a trick unworthy his position as a clergyman. It was thought a device for bringing in aid the questionable popularity of "Tristram Shandy" to help off one of the most sacred functions of a clergyman. But, in truth, this has been rather a harsh view to take of what, perhaps, might have been a mere publisher's suggestion. They were, besides, not introduced under the authorship of Tristram Shandy, but of Mr. Yorick, an amiable clergyman, with whose sufferings and pathetic end all were familiar. The fact was, Mr. Sterne was better known as "Mr. Yorick," than as Mr. Sterne, and it was really a par-

donable device which deceived nobody. With the ill-natured feeling then abroad against him, it was natural that he should anticipate some hostile comment upon this proceeding; and in a characteristic preface he remonstrates with his public. He hopes "the most serious reader will find nothing to offend him"—in putting this new title to his newer work. "Lest it should be otherwise, I have added a second title-page with the real name of the author. The first will serve the bookseller's purpose, and the second will ease the minds of those who see a jest, and the danger which lurks under it where no jest was meant;" and accordingly in the volume is to be found a separate fly-leaf, for the benefit of such tender consciences as were liable to be pricked. Could a more ample apology be expected, or one in a more deprecatory key; with, at the same time, a sly hit—in that "danger which lurks under" a jest—at the absurd and uncharitable sensitiveness then abroad? Then, pleasantly taking credit for their being hastily written, and carrying the marks of haste with them, as evidence of their coming "more from the heart than the head," he prays to God it may do the world the service he wishes, and winds up with a declaration that he rests "with a heart much at ease upon the protection of the humane and candid, from whom I have received many favours, for which I beg leave to return them thanks—thanks." "The man's head," said Walpole, in one of his charitable humours, "indeed was a little turned before, but is now topsy-turvy with his success and

fame." But this Sermon Preface, so modest and humble, could scarcely have come from a topsy-turvy head.

The testimony of Lady Cowper may be accepted as a specimen of the average public opinion. "Pray read Yorick's Sermons," wrote that lady to her friend, Mrs. Delany, in Ireland, "though you would not read 'Tristram Shandy;' I like them exceedingly, and I think he must be a good man;" a reflection which would suggest itself to others on rising fresh from the perusal of Mr. Yorick's new Sermons.

In fact, before the Sermons had made their appearance, exception had been taken to this peculiar shape of the advertisement:—"If he print his 'Dramatic Sermons,'" says a character in the *Public Ledger*, "I'll publish my harlequin sermon, that's poz;" and then says that this phrase, "dramatic discourses," is used in many of the receipts for the subscription money, given out "by a gentleman called the Rev. Mr. S——, for the discourses of Mr. Yorick." This piece of indiscretion is more than probable. The whole was, indeed, an injudicious artifice, and such as one who carried more "ounces of ballast" than Yorick would have been sensible enough to avoid—and the profit would not have compensated for the inconvenience: but it certainly was the lightest of the offences laid to Yorick's clerical character.

Very droll was the equivoque which Mr. Sterne told long after in his "Journey," in reference to this

very title. Who was the Bishop—one of the first of our own Church, for whose "candour and paternal sentiments I have the highest veneration"—who said "he could not bear to look into sermons wrote by the King of Denmark's jester"?

"Good my lord," said Mr. Sterne, "there are *two* Yoricks. The Yorick your Lordship thinks of has been dead and buried eight hundred years ago—he flourished in Horwendillus' Court. The other Yorick is myself, *who have flourished, my Lord, in no Court.*

"He shook his head.

"'Good God!' said I, 'you might as well compare Alexander the Great with Alexander the coppersmith, my lord.'

"'It was all one,' he replied."

Mr. Sterne thought "that if Alexander of Macedon could have translated his Lordship, the Bishop would not have said so." This is a specimen of Mr. Sterne's best sketching. We almost hear and see the Prelate shaking his head and repeating, "It was all one."

The "Sermons" were introduced in the prettiest garb that could be conceived. Neat pocket volumes prettily printed in a bright type, and the portrait of the Editor, reduced from the famous one by Mr. Reynolds, and exquisitely engraved. These attractions made the work cheap at five shillings. "Have you read his Sermons," writes Gray, "with his own comic figure at the head of them?" Scarcely "comic," but a store of thought and originality,

much latent humour, and a profound Rabelais twinkle.*

But the poet was charmed with them. He thought they were "in the style most proper for the pulpit, and show a strong imagination and a sensible heart." Dr. Johnson, who could not relish "the man Sterne,"† was not likely to give a good word to his sermons. Mr. Cradock, who knew both, tells us how cordially the "grand old Samuel" disliked the great humourist. A lady asked the Doctor how he liked Yorick's Sermons. In his rough, blunt way, he answered her—"I know nothing about them, madam!" Later on, the subject was renewed, perhaps started by one whom he might have considered to be more competent to deal with them, and he then censured them with much severity. The lady, who had not forgotten his plain reply, sharply retorted—"I understood, sir, you had not read them." "No, madam," roared the sage, "I *did* read them, but it was in a stage-coach; I should not even have deigned to have looked at them *had I been at large!*" This elaborate onslaught was due to the great critic's temper of mind, for there were many other works of inferior quality

* Though the publication was spread over some eight years, there was a uniformity observed in the shape of Mr. Sterne's books seldom met with in other directions. A complete set of the original editions is rarely to be found, and for the *bouquinant* makes a very pretty spectacle.

† The same Frenchman who rendered this so curiously as "*l'homme sevère*," translates the Doctor's favourite "Why no, sir," quite as oddly by "Pourquoi? non monsieur."

which he deigned to look at—even enjoy. He was delighted with Blair's correct but feeble sermons. To another lady, the "vivacious" Miss Monckton, he was scarcely less civil, when the same topic was started. She was urging that some of Sterne's writings were very pathetic, a modified shape of approbation which could scarcely be disputed. Again Johnson broke out, and denied it. "I am sure," she said, "they have affected me." This left so happy an opening for a good retort that the huge sage began to smile and roll himself about, before speaking. "Why, that is because, dearest, you are a dunce;" which unparliamentary stroke he afterwards handsomely withdrew, saying, "with equal truth and politeness, "Madam, if I had thought so, I certainly should not have said it." Posterity has happily reversed many of these rough-and-ready verdicts.

The moralist someway never forgave "the man Sterne." In his own city of Lichfield, the old animosity to the Sermons turned up again. One "Mr. Wickens," whose books he was turning over, showed him the obnoxious discourses. The sight of it was like a piece of scarlet cloth. "Sir," roared the Doctor, "do you ever read any others?" "Yes," answered Mr. Wickens, with a little spiritual vanity; "I read Sherlock, and Tillotson, and Beveridge, and others." "Ay, sir," broke out the other, in a rather imperfect metaphor, "*there* you drink the cup of salvation to the bottom; here, you have merely the froth from the surface." But

still he could appreciate him: and he told a friend of Sterne's long after, that it required all his powers to neutralise the effects of the humourist's fascinating powers of conversation, upon their common friends, Garrick and Reynolds.*

The correct but prolix author of "Clarissa" was fearfully scandalised by the new book. The Reverend Monk Hildersly wrote from his bishopric of the Isle of Man to know "Who is this Yorick? I have heard he has the recommendation of some ingenious duchess." "You cannot imagine," writes back Mr. Richardson, "I have looked into these books. Execrable I cannot but call them." And then adds, what reads very comically for those who shrink back from the weary and protracted incidents of the excellent Sir Charles Grandison's life, "that he has had only patience" to "run through" a portion of the book. The *execrable* performance still keeps its ground, and shall be read, not "run through," so long as genuine humour shall be cared for; but "Virtue Rewarded," diluted through innumerable volumes, is regarded, in spite of all its real merits, with a distant and awful respect.

In that same letter he takes the trouble of copying out the sentiments of a young lady who has been shocked by the perusal of "Tristram," and who ventures on a remarkable literary prediction. "But mark my prophecy," said she impressively, "that by another season it will be *as much*

* "European Magazine."

decried as it is now extolled. It has not sufficient merit to prevent its sinking when no longer upheld by the breath of fashion." There is a pendant for this forecasting in Doctor Farmer's prophecy, who, a little later, requested his friend, "B. N. Turner," to mark his (Dr. Farmer's) words, and remember that he had predicted that, "in twenty years, the man who wished to refer to 'Tristram Shandy' would have to ask for it of an antiquary." The person reporting this in the year 1818, adds with complacent dulness:—"*This was truly prophetic!*" Posterity, however, "marking" the words of Doctor Farmer, looks back literally on a profusion of editions, continued steadily from the very birth of the two first volumes of "Tristram,"—editions of every size, shape, pattern, and price; and Mr. Bohn, who possesses a stereotyped edition, testifies to a steady regular annual demand of so many thousand copies, in fatal refutation of the vaticination of Doctor Farmer, and Mr. Richardson's "young lady."

At length this London carnival was to close, and, after his three months' revel, Tristram must return to rustic life again, and go back to Yorkshire.

On Sunday, the eighteenth of May, he had the honour of preaching before the judges—the second time of his performing that function. He had already bought a pair of horses for the journey; and in less than a week after the appearance of his Sermons, was on his road home. A very different man, it is to be feared. It must have been a well-ballasted mind that could have stood such a pro-

bation. Such was scarcely Yorick's. The pettings of the great, the fellowship of fashionable men, the flatteries of the crowd, must have worked indescribable mischief; worse than all, he took home with him the approbation of his spiritual superiors. Here was a shield to stand between him and any well-meant remonstrances of friends. Happy for him if Garrick's remark was only true in part:— "He degenerated in London," said the actor, sorrowfully, "like an ill-transplanted shrub. The incense of the great spoiled his head, as their ragouts had done his stomach."

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

"SHANDY HALL."

Coxwould, the new curacy, was on the Thirsk high road, and about sixteen miles from York city; Stillington, his other charge, lay within six miles' ride, and Sutton was about four miles beyond Stillington. On the whole, the "cure" of all three would not seem to have been a very laborious duty, especially as the "souls" were not very abundant. Still he found it necessary to subsidise a curate for Sutton and Stillington, and confine himself wholly to the pastoral charge of Coxwould. "A sweet retirement in comparison with Sutton," he called it, not very long before his death, when reviewing the scenes of his many wanderings. Red tiles and red brick furnished a warm air of colouring to the place; and it boasted but a single inn, which was the Ferry House, close to the river.

And, perhaps, when he thought of the long low house, which was fitted at each end with two quaint heavy gables, and which rambled away round the corner into a great tall brick shoulder and a high pyramidal chimney, that started from the ground like a buttress, whose function it indeed served, and

then finished off behind with a low sloping roof within a few feet of the ground: when he thought of the cheerful red-tiled roof, rustic and old-fashioned, yet suggestive of comfort, and of the fringe of ivy which hung over the doorway, and the diamond-paned windows, and of the pretty Coxwould church, which faced his windows from the side of the road, and of the little village, and of Lord Fauconberg's pleasant park, close by, where he used to drive—no wonder that, at the close of his wild Bohemian career, that picture should come back upon him with a breath of pleasant memories. "This Shandy Castle of mine," he began to christen it within a few weeks of his arrival. It soon grew to be "Shandy Hall;" and by the name of Shandy Hall it is known to this day.

And behind was my Uncle Toby's bowling-green —where the mimic sieges of Namur and Dendermond were carried on with such unflagging regularity—and the arbour, where the author of Uncle Toby wrote of the summer evenings.* Sometimes, when he is very low in spirits, it becomes what he quaintly calls "a cuckoldy retreat." Hence that comic word has crept into the dialect of the district; and a verb, "to shandy it," has been gathered up by local philologists, and set in a vocabulary.

His parishioners, it would seem, were scanty

* Shandy Hall, after remaining long in a state of dilapidation, has lately been put in thorough repair by Sir George Wombwell, the lord of the soil.

enough: "Unless for the few sheep left me to take care of," he wrote later, "in this wilderness, I might as well, nay better, be at Mecca." But this might have been one of its *agrémens*. Another was the vicinity of Lord Fauconberg and his park, scarcely a mile away: and to visit that nobleman, he used very often to drive out in a new chaise, drawn by the London horses, while little "Lyd" cantered along gaily by their side, on a pony purchased for her by her indulgent father. There he found Lord Belasyse, and Lady Anne, to whom his company was always welcome. Naturally enough then he would have enjoyed his new habitation. He was done with Sutton and Stillington: and a curate —the Reverend Mr. Walker—took care of those parishes for him.

Bishopsthorpe, the Archbishop's palace, was but a short distance away. He must have enjoyed the archiepiscopal hospitality often, but with Archbishop Drummond he seems to have been most intimate; and when not very far off his end, and journeying down wearily to Coxwould, he was received into the Archbishop's palace for rest. He could have marked all the improvements and restorations with which the whole series of Archbishops amused themselves, and have seen how Dr. Gilbert "altered the windows in the large dining-room, laid the floor in the hall with tiles, and built a coach-house, and over it a laundry." And perhaps he mourned the Vandalism of Dr. Hay Drummond, who carted away the stones from the castle where Cardinal Wolsey

SHANDY HALL.

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came to "lay his bones," in order to build with them a gallery and "a porter's lodge." *

His acquaintance had increased. Sir Charles Sedley, Sir Charles Davers, General Atkinson, "Great Scroope," Mr. Hales, and Mr. Turner of Kirkleatham—all good names—these were now some of his Yorkshire friends. The pile of building at Kirkleatham—almost palatial—and erected under the superintendence of Carr and Chambers, was a sight for tourists. The owner's plans and operations were on a princely scale. He had even tried to create a rival watering-place to Scarborough; and excited the admiration of Arthur Young by his husbandry.†

He did not, however, go straight to Coxwould. The duties of his stall, now so long suspended, required his presence at York: and for little more than a fortnight after his return, he is dating letters from that city. And his first letter is to his Episcopal patron Warburton, with a present of "two sets" of his sermons. He did not know the Bishop's address, and therefore "could think of no better expedient than to order them into Mr. Berrenger's hands;" ‡ then takes the opportunity of making a very earnest and grateful acknowledgment for past favours. "The truest and humblest thanks I

* Mountain's "History of Cawood."

† A picture of this magnificent edifice, as it appeared about the year 1730, will be found in the *Délices de la Grande Bretagne*.

‡ Mr. Berrenger was a person of fashion, well known in London, and Master of the Horse at the Palace.

return to your Lordship for the generosity of your protection and advice to me: by making a good use of the one, I will hope to deserve the other. I wish your Lordship all the health and happiness in this world; for I am your Lordship's most obliged and most grateful servant, "L. STERNE."

He adds in a postscript that he is about "sitting down to go on with Tristram, &c. The scribblers use me ill, but they have used my betters much worse, for which may God forgive them." A skilful reference to the rough treatment his patron and himself experienced from "the scribblers."

Warburton and Garrick had been already in communication in reference to our "heteroclite Parson." The Bishop, perhaps, was a little uneasy, lest his indiscreet *protégé* should bring his hastily-bestowed patronage into discredit. Garrick was really interested in his friend's welfare and reputation. The splendid donor of the "Purse of Gold" would naturally be the most suitable person to take up the ungrateful office of monitor; and the actor had sent to Prior Park, by the hands of Mr. Berrenger, some "hints" as to the erratic behaviour of "our heteroclite Parson." The present of the sermons furnished an excellent opening, which the Bishop was not slow to seize.

In a week's time the Bishop replied. An admirable letter, written in the full weighty style to which that Prelate, when he chose, could adapt himself. A letter, too, skilfully adapted to the strange spirit he was addressing, and which

delicately insinuated advice, and even reproof, without the cold air of professional admonishment. "Reverend sir," it began, "I have your favour of the 9th instant, and am glad to understand you are got safe home, and *employed again in your proper studies.*" This is a curious remark, considering that Mr. Sterne had told him that he "was just sitting down to go on with Tristram." "You have it in your power to make that which is an amusement to yourself and others, useful to both; at least you should above all things beware of its becoming hurtful to either by any violations of decency and good manners; but I have already taken such repeated liberties of advising you on that head, that to say more were needless, or perhaps unacceptable."

He then touches on some discreditable panegyrics on the author of Tristram — "odes as they are called," which were notoriously written by Hall Stevenson; and he turns Sterne's allusion to "the scribblers" very happily. "Whoever," he says, "is any way well received by the public is sure to be annoyed by that pest of the public, *profligate scribblers*. There are two Odes, as they are called, printed by Dodsley. Whoever was the author, he appears to be a monster of impiety and lewdness. Yet such is the malignity of the scribblers, some have given them to your friend Hall; and others, which is still more impossible, to yourself, though the first ode has the insolence to place you both in a mean and a ridiculous light.

But this might arise from a tale, equally groundless and malignant, that you had shown them to your acquaintance in MS. before they were given to the publick. Nor was their being printed by Dodsley the likeliest means of discrediting the calumny." He then alludes to the little biographical portrait in "a Female Magazine" ("for dulness has made them, it seems, *male and female*"), and asks, "Pray, have you read it, or do you know the author?"

These are all shafts from the Warburtonian armoury—favourite weapons from his controversial wars. A cloud of insinuations and rumours wounding in the highest degree to personal vanity, but which he clears himself from, by an affectation of disbelief. The way in which he insinuates the "impossibility" of Hall's being credited with the productions, who was at the same time notorious for freedom of speech and verse, and whose characteristic manner was at once to be recognised, is skilfully done. Nor does he let pass by the suspicious circumstance of Dodsley being the printer both of the "Odes" and "Tristram Shandy."

But that he really scarcely cared to disguise his private conviction as to these matters, is plain from the conclusion of the letter. "But of all these things, I daresay Mr. Garrick, whose prudence is equal to his honesty or his talents, has remonstrated to you with the freedom of a friend." If these were mere untrue rumours, how should Mr. Sterne merit any such expostulation? And finally, by an admirable panegyric of the actor, he

skilfully points the moral, and indirectly hints to Mr. Sterne a course of conduct which he might imitate with profit. "He (Mr. Garrick) knows the inconstancy of what is called the publick, towards all, even the best intentioned of those who contridute to its pleasure or amusement. He (*as every man of honour and discretion would*) has availed himself of the public favour to regulate the taste, and in his proper station to reform, the manners of the fashionable world; while by a well-judged economy, he has provided against the temptations of a mean *and servile dependence on the follies and vices of the great.*

"In a word, be assured, there is no one more sincerely wishes your welfare and happiness than, Reverend sir, W. G."

Making allowance for a little natural anxiety to save his own credit as a patron, by keeping the *protégé* steady, it must be said again, that this is an admirable letter. It had been well for this turbulent Prelate had he been always thus temperate.

The following day he sent a copy of his admonition together with Sterne's letter, to Garrick—writing from Prior Park. "I heard enough," he wrote, "of his conduct in town since I left it to make me think he would soon lose the fruits of all the advantage he had gained by a successful effort, and would disable me from appearing as his friend or well-wisher. Since he got back to York, I had the enclosed letter from him, which afforded me an opportunity I was not sorry for, to tell him my

mind, and with all frankness . . . . If it have any effect, it will be well for him; if it have not, it will be at least well for me, in the satisfaction I shall receive in the attempt to do him service."

On the 19th, Mr. Sterne replies. Advice or reproof, no matter how artfully disguised, are never very welcome; and there is in this second letter a tone half-wounded, half-defiant, and very different from the humble, grateful cadences of the first. He protests he would willingly "give no offence to mortal, by anything which I think can look like the least violation of either decency or good manners." Still at the same time it is hard in a work of the riotous complexion of Tristram "to mutilate everything in it, down to the prudish humour of every particular" (this was, in effect, what he had not long before written to the anonymous medical friend on the text, "*de mortuis*, &c."). "I will, however, do my best," he goes on, "*though laugh, my Lord, I will, and as loud as I can too.*"

He then clears himself from any participation in "the Odes, as they are called;" and there is no reason why we should not accept this explanation. They were sent to him in a cover anonymously, and after striking out some of the grosser portions, he showed them round to all his friends as "a whimsical performance." This would account for his receiving the credit of their authorship. Garrick, too, who was skilful at *vers de société*, had threatened him with an Ode; and he naturally concluded that this was his performance. True it

was in Hall Stevenson's hand, but their correspondence had been interrupted for nineteen years, and it was natural that he should have forgotten its character. But as soon as he discovered who it came from, he "sent it back with his extreme concern a man of such talents should give the world such scandal."

He then speaks with genuine feeling of the cruel onslaughts which had been made on his character and his works. There is a soreness in his tone which, in spite of his vaunting declaration that he would "laugh loud," shows that he was deeply wounded.

"Of all the vile things wrote against me, that in the *Female Magazine* was the most inimicitious," (where did he light on that strange Johnsonian word?) "These strokes in the dark, with the many kicks, cuffs, and bastinadoes I openly get on all sides of me are beginning to make me sick of this foolish humour of mine, of sallying forth into this wide and wicked world to redress wrongs. Otherwise I wish from my heart I had never set pen to paper, but continued hid in the quiet obscurity in which I had so long lived. I was quiet, for I was below envy, yet above want; and indeed so very far above it that the idea of it never once entered my head in writing, and as I am £200 a year further from the danger of it than I was then, I think it never will." A year afterwards Mr. Sterne was describing his temperament to a less reverend intimate—"I would else just now lay down and die;

and yet in half an hour's time I'll lay a guinea I shall be as merry as a monkey, and as mischievous too, ... so that this is but a *copy of the present train running* across my brain." And these dolefuls, written to Warburton, were also no more than "a copy of the present train." The next half hour he was sure to be back again in his London paradise. Fame and profit are not parted with so cheerfully, nor is the ruefulness of a moment of despondency to be accepted as a true choice. Even as he wrote the "*mischievousness*" and "merriness" of the monkey were not far away, and there was surely balm in the recollection that "the Bishop of Carlisle called yesterday." This episcopal patronage of a "heteroclite Parson" grows every instant more surprising. This was Bishop.

A reply from Warburton, written apparently by the earliest return post, closes this correspondence. His explanation has warmed the Bishop into warmth and cordiality. It is in the same happy tone of advice and compliment, and even irony, which distinguished the first. It ran: "It gives me real pleasure that you are resolved to do justice to your genius, and to borrow no aids to support it, but what are of the party of honour, virtue, and religion. You say you will continue to laugh aloud. In good time. But one who was no more than even a man of spirit would wish to laugh in good company, where priests and virgins may be present. Notwithstanding all your wishes for your former obscurity which your present chagrined state excites,

yet a wise man cannot but choose the sunshine before the shade; indeed, he would not wish to dwell in the malignant heat of the dog-days, not for the teasing and momentary annoyances of the numberless tribes of insects abroad, *but for the more fatal aspect of the superior bodies.*" A friendly and prophetic hint as to his ecclesiastical prospects of preferment, which it had been well he had weighed in his "sweet retirement" at Coxwould. "I would recommend as a maxim to you what Bishop Sherlock formerly told me Dr. Bentley remarked to him, that a man was never writ out of the reputation he had fairly won but by himself." A wholesome truth, to be curiously exemplified in Warburton's own instance; with which this little episode closes, together with a well-meant and judicious effort at remonstrance, which is unlikely to have had any effect upon a character such as Sterne's was. The whole is highly creditable to Warburton, who displays a delicacy and gentleness surprising to those familiar with his rough free-lance mode of action, and the terrible portraits done of him by Churchill.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

TRISTRAM AT HIS DESK.

FAIRLY established at Coxwould by July, he was now at work on his new volumes. That ninth of June, the day he sent his sermons to Warburton, he was sitting down to make a beginning, and he got on very rapidly with the work. But so acutely had he felt the rough handling of the critic, that before he had written two or three pages, his thoughts strayed back to his still raw wounds, and the cruel "bastinadoes" inflicted by "the scribblers." He could not resist the temptation of showing his scars to the world, and dealing with them in true Shandy fashion, possibly to deprecate further rough usage. But he had not yet learned that the happiest retort against such attacks was passiveness, or at least the affectation of indifference. If mind and body were indeed like "a jerkin and a jerkin's lining," and the violent rumpling of the one entailed the rumpling of the other, the wise man will not run through the streets showing the tumbled folds to every passer-by. "Never poor jerkin," he wrote, "has been tickled off at such a rate as it has been these last nine months together . . . . . pell-

mell, helter-skelter, ding-dong, back stroke and fore stroke, side way and long way, have they been trimming it for me." He then turns back to the severest of all the attacks, that in the *Monthly Review*, and addresses them with comic expostulation. "You, Messrs. the Monthly Reviewers, how could you cut and slash my jerkin as you did? how did you know but you would cut my lining too? Only next month, if any of you should gnash his teeth, and storm and rage at me as some of you did last MAY (in which I remember the weather was very hot), don't be exasperated if I pass it by again with good temper, being determined never to give the honest gentleman a worse word or worse wish than my Uncle Toby gave the fly." A generous programme he did not strictly adhere to; and the supposed "Monthly" delinquent was seven years after gibbeted in the "Sentimental Journey."

A little farther on—a few days after in time—he has still the same bogie before him, and makes an earnest protest against those pedants of criticism who are "so hung round and befetished with all the bobs and trinkets" of their craft, like a native of the Guinea coast; and then introduces that familiar figure of "the stop-watch critic," who has figured on a thousand platforms since. "And what of this new book the whole world makes such a rout about?—O! 'tis out of all plumb, my Lord; quite an irregular thing. I had my rule and compasses in my pocket.—Excellent critic!" He then breaks out excitedly. "Grant me patience, just

Heaven! Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world, though the cant of hypocrites may be the worst, the cant of criticism is the most tormenting." He declares he would tramp fifty miles on foot to kiss the hand of that rare description of reader "whose generous heart will give up the reins of his imagination into his author's hands—be pleased, he knows not why, and cares not wherefore." Of all books in the world did "Tristram" need that pleasant *laisser-faire* condition. He then rambled off into a curious preface, placed, according to true Shandean eccentricity, about the middle of the third volume—still apologetic—still appealing from "the scribblers"—striving hard to prove, in a curious mixture of raillery, serious argument, and illustration, that wit and judgment are not antagonistic qualities. For the "scribblers" had insinuated, that whatever might be his pretensions to the one, they effectually precluded his having any share of the other; and while sitting at his writing-table, with his "fur cap" on, "dashing and squirting" his ink about on his books and furniture, he casts his eye downwards upon his cane chair, fitted with "two knobs," and it promptly furnishes him with an illustration. For there is every reason to suspect that these familiar turns and incidents which he so freely fitted into his patch-work were scraps of his personal experience, which he would encourage and cultivate, as it were, to give an air of reality and nature to his rambling soliloquies. "I am at this moment," he says, "sitting upon one" (*i.e.*, a cane

chair); "they are fastened on, you see, with two pegs stuck slightly into two gimlet holes." Then, "for the sake of experiment, let us for a moment take off one of these two curious ornaments (I care not which) . . . . . Nay, don't laugh at it. But did you ever see in the whole course of your lives such a ridiculous business as this has made of it? Why, 'tis as miserable a sight as a sow with one ear. . . . . Do pray get off your seats only to take a view of it," &c. However, the question is to be resolved—"How it comes to pass that men of least wit are reputed to be men of most judgment?" He plays with it very pleasantly; but it must be confessed that this last "taking of the reader by the button" is a little forced, and cramped by an attempt at imitation of the Rabelais manner.

While he wrote, his health was even below its usual normal condition. He talks of his "weak nerves," and of that "vile cough" of his, which visits him with more than ordinary severity just as he is closing his fourth volume, while his head "aches dismally." These were, no doubt, the wages of his London campaign. Nor had his thin, wasted figure gained strength or flesh by that round of dissipation of which he pleasantly reminds the reader, hinting the improbability of some state of things "unless you were as *lean* a subject as myself." Still, he was furnished with "that careless alacrity which, every day of my life, prompts me *to say and write a thousand things I should not*,"

and which, in default of health, made him feel its want less acutely. And in reading the life of Sterne, his irregularities of speech and manners, that genuine confession of the "careless alacrity" furnishes the true extenuation. It helped him through many a trying moment when "the galled jade" might wince, and made him "merry as a monkey" in spite of his not having a horse worth "riding on," or being so deficient in ecclesiastical furniture as to have but "two bad cassocks in the world."

Fresh from the whirl of London politics, and with the great Minister to whom he had already dedicated, still before his eyes, he bethought him of Warburton's useful counsel as to the "greater heavenly bodies;" and ventures a delicate allusion to a picture, in the foreground of which is "a statesman turning the political wheel, like a brute, the wrong way round—against the stream of corruption —by Heaven! instead of with it," which was in the true key of compliment popularly paid to the great moderator of public affairs. Later on he notes with admiration, the cleverness with which "our government has lately been turning on its hinges." Neither had he forgotten the notes, either of song or bass viol, recently discoursed by so august a person as His Royal Highness the musical Edward Duke of York; and makes Mr. Shandy, when embarrassed by the selection of a name for his offspring, take Heaven as witness, "that in the warmest transports of my wishes for the prosperity of my child, I never

once wished to crown his head with more glory and honour, than what GEORGE or EDWARD would have spread around it."

He was very diligent. He had started with his labour about the ninth of June, just as he was sitting down to write to Warburton. By the first day or so in August—in little more than three weeks—his third volume was finished, and he was stopping for breath at the threshold of Slawkenbergius's strange adventures. Among his London friends was a certain Mrs. Fergusson, already mentioned, to whom he seems to have always written with what he calls "the careless irregularity of an easy heart," and in the gayest mood of his own natural Shandeism. All his letters to ladies have more or less of this free humour, plainly in imitation of Swift's familiar gossiping with Stella. He wrote to her as "my witty widow" on the 3rd of August, and has just risen from the last sheet of his book with brains "as dry as squeez'd orange," in which condition it is hard to think of writing to a lady of wit, except in "the honest John Trot style of *yours of the 15th instant came safe to hand*," &c. This "vile plight I found my genius in," inclined him to defer writing until the next post, in the hope of getting "some small recruit, at least of vivacity, if not wit, to set out with;" but on second thoughts "a bad letter in season, seemed preferable to a good one out of it," and so "this scrawl is the consequence, which, if you will burn the moment you get it, I promise to send you a fine set essay in the style of your

female epistolizers, cut and trim'd at all points. *God defend me from such, who never yet knew what it was to say or write one premeditated word in my whole life.*" This was pointed at Mrs. Carter and other strict ladies, whose letters on decorum and morals still fill a chilly corner in the libraries. Mrs. Carter was later to rebuke him publicly at a fashionable dinner-party, for the general tone of his writings; an act well meant, yet perhaps inappropriate in season. "I deny it," he goes on, "I was not lost two days before I left town, I was lost all the time I was there, and never found till I got to this Shandy Castle of mine." He has already laid out a fresh expedition to London, when he means "to sojourn among you with more decorum, and will neither be lost nor found anywhere."

It was to this very lady he had the year before confided the secret that he was busy with a novel, adding, "Laugh I am sure you will at some passages." To her he now reports progress of how far he had gone with the new volumes. He "wished to God" he was at her elbow, as he is longing to read them "to some one who can taste and relish humour; this, by the way, *is a little impudent in me*, for I take for granted a thing which their high mightinesses, the world, have yet to determine; but I mean no such thing, I could wish only to have your opinion. Shall I in truth give you mine? I dare not, but I will, provided you keep it to yourself. Know, then, that I think there is more laughable humour, with equal degree of Cervantic satire, if not more, than

in the last; but we are bad judges of the merit of our own children."

There is here the pleasant quaintness and fitfulness of an irregular mind revealed, with all the sudden starts and breaks of his curious temper —not the assumed dash and recklessness of Byron's letters; but pure natural Shandeism,—a thought suggesting itself, abandoned before it is half developed, and another taken up, to be abandoned after the same fashion. All his letters to Mrs. Sterne—which he could have no suspicion would ever see the light—are in the same diverting key, and full of breaks and spasms. Of the same character, too, we may assume, was his talk in society.

He was now at work diligently with the companion volume. Not all his taste for carnivals, and the general frivolities of society, seems ever to have interfered with settled habits of curious reading and industrious writing. No wonder that near the completion of his task he should exclaim humorously, "What a rate I have gone on at curveting and frisking it away, two up and two down, without looking once behind, or even on one side of me." And in this very passage, being now once more on the eve of passing through that terrible ordeal of criticism in which he had suffered so sorely, the grim ogre again rises before him, and he tries hard to deprecate its coming fury. "I'll tread upon no one, quoth I to myself when I mounted. I'll take a good rattling gallop, but I'll not hurt the poorest jackass upon the road. So off

I set, up one lane, down another, through this turnpike, over that, as if the arch-jockey of jockeys had got behind me. . . . . He's flung—he's off—he's lost his seat—he's down—he'll break his neck—see if he has not galloped full amongst the scaffolding of the undertaking critics—he'll knock his brains out against some of their posts. . . . . Don't fear, said I, I'll not hurt the poorest jackass upon the king's high-way." He then thinks of Warburton, and the "story of Tristram's pretended tutor," and niches in an amende to his patron. "'But your horse throws dirt—see, you have splashed a bishop.' '*I hope in God 'twas only Ernulphus,*' said I."

In short, so diligently had he laboured, that by the first week in October such persons as took the *London Chronicle*, read in their copy of October the 9th, a very cheering announcement for all Shandeans:—

"The public is desired to take notice, that the THIRD AND FOURTH VOLUMES of Tristram Shandy, by the author of the first and second volumes, will be published about Christmas next. Printed for R. & J. Dodsley, in Pall Mall, where may be had:

"1. A New Edition of the two first volumes.

"2. The Sermons of Mr. Yorick, published by the Rev. Mr. Sterne, Prebendary of York."

The caution as to the new volumes being from the pen of "the author of the first and second," was, in consequence of an impudent counterfeit which had

just appeared—a sham third volume, by one Carr, which for similarity of type, shape, and everything but genius, had taken in a few readers and some buyers. It will be seen, too, that Tristram was travelling gaily through successive new editions; and that in spite of the "day-tall critics," and that "trimming of his jacket" by the *Monthly Reviewers*, he still put his sermons forth as having been preached by Mr. Yorick. For these new volumes Dodsley gave no less a sum than three hundred and eighty pounds,* a very large sum considering the size of the volumes, and an excellent test of the book's popularity. It was, however, not to be paid until six months after it had gone to press.

By the beginning of November he was more than half-way through his second volume—a little bit of internal evidence helping us to his position. At the end of his thirteenth chapter he calls out, "Heaven prosper the manufacturers of paper under this propitious reign which is now opened to us," which shows it must have been written *after* the death of George the Second, which occurred during the last few days of October. But just now, down at his retirement, he was aspiring to the full-blown dignity of a Doctor of Divinity. He was thinking of Dodd rustling past him at St. James's, and those stately letters of honour, "D.D.," would add a greater weight to his name. He had even written

* This appears from the original contract, which was sold by auction a few years ago.

a "clerum" as an exercise. But he wisely forbore. Perhaps he thought that the title-page of "Tristram Shandy, by the Rev. Laurence Sterne, D.D.," endorsed though it was by high ecclesiastical authority, might offend. He did not proceed further than his "clerum."

The strange Latin letter which he wrote to his friend Hall, must be placed somewhere about this date; for he mentions in it that he was over forty years old. It is in sorry dog-Latin,—thoroughly Shandean, and exhibits but a sorry piece of morality too. It was a strange carelessness or blindness that allowed of the publication of such a production; written as it is in a vein of intimate confidence that even chose Latin for its vehicle. In it he confesses that he is *fatigatus et ægrotus de meo uxore plus quam unquam*, and that he is eager to get up to London, not to show himself or for mere fame's sake, but because a *diabolus amabundus* has entered into him; with more to the same effect, too confidential to be produced here. This wanton, roystering epistle, written in a York coffee house, "*in domo coffetariâ*," in the midst of a noisy crowd, the fruit of companionship with the loose guild of Crazy Castle, is surely not the sort of evidence that should be "let in" in a Biographical Court of Law.

How he spent these days while he scribbled on in hot haste ("whipped and driven to the last pinch, at the worst I shall have one day the start of my pen, and one day is enough, for *two volumes will be enough*

for one year"), and what was doing down at Coxwould, we cannot speculate. There are no materials to help us. Perhaps he visited Scarboro'; and he must have taken his turn of prebendal duty at York. This Coxwould existence is almost a blank. Was he acquainted with a certain "Rev. Robert Midgely, A.M.," who had been nearly fifty years Master of the Free-school at Coxwould, and who died in the June of the following year at the age of seventy-seven? Did he know the Reverend Mr. Mason, the correct but tame poet, who was then Rector of a Yorkshire parish, at Aston, was looking out with wistful eyes for a canonry or prebendary-ship, promised to him by Dean Fountayne?—the present incumbent of which exhibited a perverse vitality, upon which Mr. Gray often pleasantly rallied his friend. The York canon was pronounced incurable, and subject to every conceivable mortal ill—yet would not die. So that the just reflection was made by the poet, that if we wish to secure longevity, we should procure some one to be nominated to an office in succession to ourselves. Not for years afterwards did this obstinate prebendary die; and then at last Mr. Mason became one of the York chapter, and directed the choir with effect.

Mr. Sterne, too, may have fiddled a little—encouraged by the praise of the royal amateur. He may have used his pencil as of old; and perhaps it was about this date that he took his share in that droll pictorial partnership which Doctor Dibdin, the eminent virtuoso (librarian also to the noble family of

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Spencers, who were friends and patrons of Sterne's), heard of when he came to York city long after, upon his bibliographical tour. These illustrious tomes, so opulent in the richest fancy dress of print and paper, have in their own degree a certain quaint Shandeism. Doctor Dibdin came to York, and with his friend, Mr. Atkinson, explored the quaint old city and its curiosities. Among other matters Mr. Atkinson showed him an old oil painting, rather rudely executed, but characteristic enough, representing a mountebank doctor and his man, exhibiting on a platform in the open street. The open street, with its sign-posts and projecting bow-window, is clearly meant for old York; the Bearded Dulcamara shows the face of one "Mr. Brydges," a jovial York citizen of Mr. Sterne's set —and in the face of the Doctor's man, who wears a sort of clown's dress, are to be recognised the features of Mr. Sterne. An exaggerated, but still a good likeness. The whole was a sort of pictorial *jeu d'esprit*; and it is said that Mr. Brydges sat to Mr. Sterne for the figure of the quack doctor, while Mr. Sterne sat to him for the clown. The father of Mr. Atkinson knew Mr. Sterne, and had many curious stories about him, which, like so many other curious recollections, have unhappily faded out. A rough out-door sketch of Mr. Sterne, however, escaped destruction, and the father remembered well and told his son of the long shambling figure —ill-dressed and slovenly—roaming abstractedly through the narrow York streets, talking to itself,

and attended by a little procession of jeering York boys.

Meanwhile, the London public were warned occasionally of the Shandean dainties now being prepared for them at Coxwould. The Dodsleys put forth advertisements, now and again, in the *London Chronicle:* and Mr. Sterne having dashed in the last sentence of his last page, "Please your worships and reverences, I take my leave of you till this time twelvemonth, when, unless this vile cough kills me in the meantime, I'll have another pluck at your beards, and lay open a story to the world you little dream of," packed up his mails, and once more took the York stage for London.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

A SECOND LONDON VISIT.

He found London in a curious flutter and confusion. Every eye was on the palace and its new tenant. Every one was following "this charming young King," as Walpole called him, and noting his grace and good nature, "which breaks out on all occasions"—but with far more feverish interest, waited on that shuffle of court places and offices which a new reign brought with it. Up to the death of the late King, the German war, as it was called, and the glories of British arms abroad, absorbed the public mind. Every packet brought some morsel of news acceptable to the national vanity. The King of Prussia and Prince Ferdinand were the popular heroes. But now this ardour had suddenly cooled. A profusion of places was thrown open to competition, and became the object of an unseemly scramble. The public, though it could not hope to be a gainer in any direction, looked on from afar with intense excitement. News was brought of a great victory of his Prussian Majesty over Marshal Daun. This, says Walpole, which would have been "prodigious news a month ago,

now only takes its turn among the questions, Who is to be Groom of the Bedchamber?"

The series of dismissals from this important office—the selection from the new or old ranks—kept every one in a ferment of excitement. Every day was a fresh intrigue, and a fresh addition; and it became a mingled yarn of Whig and Tory, until the overgrown list numbered twenty Lords and seventeen Grooms of the Chamber. Politics, too, were in strange confusion, there being no less than three distinct Ministers—representing distinct influences—in office. So that the *bon mot* of a witty Mrs. Hardinge—which was in everybody's mouth—expressed the situation very happily, that the grand question was, what fuel the King was to burn in his chamber, Scotch coal, Newcastle coal, or Pitt coal. The Newcastle was an old-fashioned material; the Pitt, very popular and national; but it was easy to see that the Scotch Bute coal—which enjoyed the partiality of the King—would drive all other fuel out of consumption.

Against this once popular German war, too, the tide had suddenly turned. The air became filled with fluttering pamphlets—all written in the one key: "Thoughts on a Peace!" "Considerations on a Peace," &c. And just at this crisis, about ten days before Chrismas-day, Mr. Sterne arrived in London, with his Tristram MSS. in his valise. The time is almost fixed by a fresh advertisement of the Dodsleys, dated December 19, announcing that the new book would be out in the course of

the next month—a notice likely to be given on the delivery of the MSS. to the printers; and by a letter of Mr. Sterne's, written on Christmas-day, the tone of which shows he had been in London about a week.

The remarkable change struck Mr. Sterne very forcibly. He, too, observed how much the tide had turned against the German war since he was last in London, and noted the low murmurs now afloat as to its being made a means of traffic for interested parties. He heard it loudly condemned at his fashionable dinners, and at the Mount and other coffee-houses; and saw that Butes and anti-Butes would soon take the place of the old party words Whig and Tory. "For aught I know," he said, "this will do just as well." Some bad news of a disaster at Campen had just come in, at which the hereditary Prince had been defeated, and much British blood spilt. Mr. Sterne met a Colonel on Christmas Eve, newly arrived; and this gentleman told him, that "out of two battalions of nine hundred men to which he belonged, there were but seventy-one left." Walpole wrote out to Sir Horace Mann a sort of comic list of casualties, how "Lord Downe," a fellow Yorkshireman of Sterne's, "had three wounds; Johnny Waldegrave shot through the hat and coat, and would have been through the body if he had one; Irish Johnson is wounded in the hand; Ned Harvey, somewhere," &c.

From the moment of his arrival, the old carnival

set in. The flood of visitors and reciprocal visitings, feasts, dinners, politics, with correcting of proofs, left him not an instant. His dinner list was, as usual, full, and by a little computation we can discover, that for somewhere about five weeks he never dined one day at home! and he was besides afraid "that matters would be worse with him." This was but an affected depreciation, for the dinner-table was his paradise. These dinner testimonials so long sustained without change or fickleness, must be accepted as the best testimonials to his wit and spirits and powers of conversation.

The new "Shandys" had been read in MSS. to Mr. Croft at Stillington Hall, and it was now shown about London to a select few. The Crofts, however, upon reflection, had misgivings, and were naturally nervous about the curious adventures of Slawkenbergius—the secret significance of which could not be misunderstood—and Mr. Croft wrote him a sort of friendly remonstrance for fear lest this doubtful passage should injure the book. Mr. Sterne acknowledged this friendly act very gratefully, but reassured his "kind friends at Stillington," because "it shifts off the idea of what you fear to another point," as the satire "is levelled at those learned blockheads, who in all ages have wasted their time and learning upon points as foolish." A reasonable view of the whole chapter.

In London, however, there were no such scruples. "'Tis thought here very good—'twill pass muster. I mean not with all. No, no! I shall be attacked

and pelted either from cellars or garrets, write what I will; and beside, must expect to have a party against me of many hundreds, who either do not, or will not, laugh. 'Tis enough if I divide the world, —at least, I will rest contented with it." The cellars and garrets swarmed with the hack labourers of Griffiths and other literary undertakers, and unconsciously included a tumbledown room in Green Arbour Court, which Goldsmith rented. How happily Mr. Sterne had learned to estimate a public audience, may be gathered from his analysis of the reading crowd, into those who *do* not or *will* not laugh; a distinction which every humorous writer will endorse. There was besides great preparatory flourish about "Tristram," and "great rout before he enters on the stage," and the leading wits, and the men of rank and station to whom it had been shown, all foretold a triumphant success.

At Court the riot of noisy pleasures of every kind and degree rose to its height. Mr. Sterne was just arrived in time. "Prepare yourself for crowds—multitudes," wrote one who had the London fashionable pulse always between his fingers. "The capital is as vulgar as a country town in the season of horse races. There were no fewer than four of these things on Monday last." The Royal Dukes and Princess Emily went everywhere they were invited; and when not invited, invited themselves. "He of York" was to be seen dancing *partout*.

Mr. Sterne shared in the general infatuation about the "charming young king." He wrote enthusias-

tically about him to his friends at Stillington—how he rose at six for business, rode out at eight "to a minute, looked into everything himself, and was determined to stop the torrent of corruption and laziness." It was the general impression, Mr. Sterne thought, that the young prince was anxious to deal directly with his people, and suffer them to have immediate access without the intervention of a cabal. This amusing vaticination now reads comically enough, as we know that at the very time the Scotch favourite was secretly organizing the most odious and effectual barrier between the throne and subject that could be conceived. Mr. Sterne was very intimate with Lord Rockingham, and the witty, flashy Charles Townshend, with Mr. Charles Spencer, and other men of politics; and writes to his country friends with a political wisdom and mysteriousness very natural but highly amusing. He alludes to "the intervention of a cabal," but corrects himself cautiously: "*this is the language of others.*" "However, the king gives everything himself, knows everything; and this puts old stagers off their game. *How it will end we are all in the dark.*" The importance expressed in this last sentence is almost comic.

The truth was, the old stagers were much put off their game, and among this party were Mr. Sterne's political friends. They were anxiously watching the next turn of the wheel, on the movements of which, no one could even speculate. The changes of men and offices had all the excitement of gam-

bling. With such protectors, no wonder Mr. Sterne was expectant. In a letter to his York friends, he hints darkly at coming preferment "All I can say is that I see my way, and unless Old Nick throws the dice, shall in due time come off winner." Unhappily, he too was among the old stagers who were put off their game, and the dice *were* eventually to be thrown by the fatal *croupier* he named.

The fact was, the new reign had started with an affectation of purism. The first step was a proclamation in favour "of decency and morality," a well-meant step, but too Utopian to be of any practical value, and suggesting the French Monthyon prize of virtue. A greater strictness in the matter of ecclesiastical preferment was to be commended; but it is to be feared that this was but narrowing the circle within the more convenient limits of favouritism. The Scotch party were to prevail universally; and before the year was out, Mr. Sterne was to see the place of his own metropolitan filled up by a Scotch prelate, John Hay Drummond, who was made Archbishop of York. Still, it was pardonable in Mr. Sterne to look for preferment. A man who knew everybody, and met everybody at everybody's dinner-table—who was intimate with Charles Townshend, the most vivacious of politicians, had at least a fair chance of a deanery or archdeaconry. To the mitre he could scarcely have lifted his eyes. But the truth is, the jesters of society are rarely promoted.

They labour under a sore disability; and the Hooks and Tom Hoods, whether lay or clerical, are cheerfully welcomed to every species of pudding and posset, save the substantial diet of office.

I have called the programme with which the new reign started, an "affected purism." It is scarcely too harsh a term, when it is considered that Lord Talbot, one of the most scandalous outragers of decorum and good manners, and Sir Francis Dashwood, the Abbot of the Medmenham monks, were the two men whom it earliest delighted to honour. Scandal did not even spare the favourite, and the Royal matron who befriended the favourite; and it is now pretty generally conceded that the caricature which figured in the shop-windows, representing Miss Chudleigh saying to the queen-mother, "Chacun à son *But*," was something more than a mere vulgar pasquinade. Such a promotion as that of Lord Talbot's in a court that, as Walpole happily put it, "advertised piety," was enough to excite a reasonable suspicion.

Mr. Sterne was wisely on good terms with his present ecclesiastical superior, Archbishop Gilbert. Miss Gilbert was now in London, and to her he paid the delicate attention of lending some prints, which he bought for the Crofts. It is some testimony in his favour that all through he seems to have been in favour with the bishop who ruled in his diocese. "Tristram," meanwhile, was being

hurried through the press. He wrote to his friends that it would be out on the twentieth of January; but it, in fact, did not appear until a week later. On the twenty-seventh, the third and fourth volumes were published.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

THE NEW "SHANDYS."

THIS second Shandy instalment was received with a mixed chorus of cheers and hisses. His prediction about the attacks and "peltings" from garret, came true exactly as he had foretold; but there was compensation in the handkerchiefs waving from drawing-room windows. One half of the town abused it with tremendous bitterness, the other extolled it as extravagantly. It has been said that its success was not so decided as that of the first volumes. But, writes Mr. Sterne, "the best is, they abuse and buy it at such a rate that we are going on with a second edition as fast as possible." This was written in the first week of March, so the first edition had been exhausted in about a month. This was a speedy sale, for not yet had set in the palmy day, when an edition would be swept off in a week.

The garreteers soon began the storm of abuse. Mr. Griffiths' men led the attack, encouraged by that indiscreet confession of sensitiveness in his apostrophe to "Messieurs of the *Monthly Review*." They justified their previous attack in the coarse,

brutal language which they were accustomed to lavish on Goldsmith and others. They spoke of "Tristram" as "the wanton brat now owned by its reverend parent." Other faults might be extenuated, but the crying sin of the new publication was dulness: "Yes, indeed, Mr. Tristram, you are dull, very dull!" and the special points of dulness selected, show at least a curious taste on the part of Mr. Griffiths' men. We are sick, they say, "of my uncle Toby's wound in his groin: we have had enough of his ravelines and breast-works: we can no longer bear *with Corporal Trim's insipidity.*" If the half of the town that abused the book, reflected this just criticism, Mr. Sterne might well console himself. Barely at the end of four volumes, and fatigued with Uncle Toby's breast-works and ravelines! Trim insipid!

Still, though there is here and there something forced in the humour, and perhaps over-much of digression, still they are very nearly as delightful as the first, a fact we shall be inclined to admit, when we consider that it contains such pictures and episodes as the famous Discussion on the Duchess of Suffolk's case; the Visitation Dinner; the Story of Slawkenbergius; the Adventure of the Drawbridge; the Curse of Ernulphus; and, over all, sprinklings of a dry humour, and the profoundest knowledge of human nature.

The Curse of Ernulphus, Mr. Shandy said, had been furnished to him by the kindness of the chapter clerk of the Cathedral at Rochester; but

the monthly reviewers insinuated that it had already travelled through many a newspaper, within the last year or two.

The longing for peace, and impatience of the war, grew steadily. Though the old Parliament was tolerably obsequious, there were members who began to declaim loudly against any further prosecution of the war. But when it was known that the chancery of Hanover had on its own responsibility laid out between three and four thousand pounds, which it expected to be repaid by the nation, loud indignation was expressed, and the fiercest opposition was expected in the House. Mr. Pitt, the great patriot minister, was expected to give an elaborate justification of the whole war.

There was intense excitement, and Mr. Sterne was taken down to the House by his Parliamentary friends. He waited the whole day. The galleries were filled to overflowing. He has left a very graphic sketch of the debate, which, when put beside Walpole's, scarcely suffers, but is quite as graphic. He tells how, after hours of weary waiting, "lo! a political fit of the gout seized the great combatant," and he did not come; how Beckford then got up and begged the House, as he saw not his "right honorable friend there, to put off the debate, how he then" made a long, passionate, incoherent speech, and "laid on" the Chancellor of the Exchequer terribly.

He was every day growing more and more the fashion. A few days after the debate Mr. John

Spencer took him down with him to Wimbleton —that Mr. John Spencer who was nephew to the Duke of Marlborough. Before the month was out, Mr. Spencer was created Lord Viscount Spencer, and was to have the next Shandy instalment dedicated to him. Then Charles Towshend had told Mr. Sterne, in confidence, that he was to be shortly made Secretary at War; so political interest was gathering fast. How was it that he could not put these friends to some profit? Charles Townshend could as surely have appealed to the favourite, as did Mr. Jenkinson in behalf of one Butler.

Then came Lady Northumberland's "Grand Assembly" on the Wednesday following, for which Mr. Sterne hurried up from Wimbleton. Lady Northumberland had been giving "Grand Assemblies" all the season; which Horace Walpole has enrolled among his festivals of honour.

Did he meet there his old college friend, the Reverend Doctor Dodd, appropriate Chaplain for the Magdalens, and who was quite as fashionable a parson as Mr. Sterne himself — the romantic divine who preached over his fallen women, and who one morning in the past year had got up that farcical and theatrical entertainment at the asylum, gathering a crowd of persons of quality, to look at his company of reformed women? It makes one of the best bits in Walpole; with the figure of the fashionable young clergyman in the centre, working his "sensation" effects with white sheets and

dramatic penitence, and preaching a strange sermon upon a yet stranger text. Walpole, with his sharp sagacity, seems to have had an instinct of something unsound underneath; but could scarcely have guessed that within a few years this ordained hypocrite was to be detected in gross simoniacal practices, and to become one of the Bohemian clergymen of the age. And yet this man, who wrote feeble verses addressed to ladies of quality, had the effrontery to address some lines of remonstrance to the author of "Tristram," which were circulated in a *Christian Magazine* which he edited, and were much admired. They ran—

> "Yes, they will laugh!—but, who?—vain Sterne, inquire;
> The wretched sons of vice and foul desire.
> To them your page immoral may be dear,
> But Virtue o'er it sheds the conscious tear.
> Is it for this you wear the sacred gown—
> To write and live the Shandy of the town?
> Is it for this the holy hand was laid—
> Thrice awful ordination—on your head?"

How appropriate was this concern for the "sacred gown" coming from one whose substitute for it—if we are to believe the story—was the dress of a French mousquetaire!

One of Mr. Croft's sons, Stephen, was in the army; the other became a brother canon of Mr. Sterne's in the Cathedral. With so powerful a friend in London, who was, besides, intimate with the Secretary at War, it seemed likely that something might be done for the military son; and Mr. Croft accordingly applied to Mr. Sterne. Mr. Sterne

writes back in all the flurry and tumult of his London parties—"I will ask him; and depend, my most worthy friend, that you shall not be ignorant of what I learn from him. Believe me *ever, ever* yours, L. S."

A week or so afterwards, Mr. Sterne met with an accident. He got a "terrible fall," which sprained his wrist and prevented his holding a pen. He had in the meantime been thinking over his friend's business, and having been asked to breakfast one morning by a Mr. V. (possibly Vansittart, who was in office at the time), "a kind of right-hand man to the Secretary," he took care to sound him on the matter. The Secretary's secretary strongly discouraged the advisability of taking any step just then, and the reasons he gave disclose a curious picture of military manners in London at this time, scarcely creditable to the spirit of our army. "You must know," wrote Mr. Sterne, "that the number of officers who have left their regiments in Germany, for the pleasures of the town, have long been a topic for merriment; as you see them in St. James's Coffee-house and the Park every hour, enquiring, with open mouth, how things go on in Germany, and what news? when they should have been there to have furnished news themselves; but the worst part of it has been, that many of them have left their brother officers on their duty, and in all the fatigues of it, and have come with no end but to make friends to be put unfairly over the heads of those who were left risking their lives. In this attempt there have

been some but too successful, which has justly raised ill blood and complaints from the officers who stayed behind—the upshot has been they have every soul been ordered off, and woe be to him ('tis said) who shall be found listening" (qy. lingering?). Thus does history repeat itself, and "urgent private affairs"—the tune chanted a hundred and two years ago, during the Great Frederick's war—was heard again only yesterday during the Crimean campaigns.

Mr. Sterne, from contact with official people, had insensibly picked up the true diplomatic fashion of dealing with applications. "Now, just to mention our friend's case," he wrote to Mr. Croft, "while this cry is on foot, I think would be doing more hurt than good; *but if you think otherwise I will go with all my heart and mention it to Mr. Townshend, for to do more I am too inconsiderable a person to pretend to.*" This is admirable. After so palpable a hint it is unlikely that Mr. Croft would presume "to think otherwise," and so Mr. Stephen's promotion remained in abeyance.

The old York enemies of Yorick were not idle all this time, and a malicious rumour was presently set afloat in that city to the effect that the fashionable Prebendary was "forbid the Court." An absurd tale on the face of it; this species of honourable banishment being confined to the court of his Most Christian King, who, for some little petulance of speech, would consign ladies and gentlemen to the frightful exile of their own estates. Pope's Duchess of Queensberry was indeed a victim

to this petty stretch of despotism; an ungallant persecution at which the town laughed long and loudly. Mr. Sterne told the story to his friends, and it afforded them much amusement. As he himself put it, he was scarcely of sufficient prominence to attract so much notice from the King. As for those about him, he added with a certain pride, "I have the honour either to stand so personally well known to them, or to be so well represented by those of the first rank, as to fear no accident of that kind." The whole story, indeed, was a natural result of the proclamation of "morals and public decency" issued by the Ministry. Yet it is plain that Mr. Sterne, with all his London triumphs to console him, felt these strokes acutely. It is with a bitter and wounded tone he declares—"I thank God I have never yet made a friend or connection I have forfeited, or done aught to forfeit, but, on the contrary, my character is better understood, and where I had one friend last year who did me honour, I have three now." He then makes a shrewd observation which may serve to console those of our own day, against whose books, secular or religious, a storm of unpopularity has raged. "If my enemies knew that by this rage of abuse and ill-will they were effectively serving both the interests of myself and works, they would be more quiet." But it has been the fate of his "betters," who have found that "the way to fame, like that to Heaven, is through much tribulation; and till I have had the honour to be as much maltreated as Rabelais and Swift were, I must continue

humble, for I have not filled up the measure of half their *persecutions.*"

There is a tone of pride, and even elation, under these complaints, very characteristic of the man; and if he put himself in the same pillory, though on a lower step, with Swift and Rabelais, he was only recollecting Warburton's compliment. It was a soothing lotion to lay to his wounds, that he was the English Rabelais still.

More comforting balm in Gilead was to come to him in the shape of an unexpected tribute to his popularity. Dr. Dodd had entertained Peers and Countesses at the "Magdalen," and made effective appeals to their sensibilities and purses. Yet from the Magdalen to the Foundling Hospital was not so great an interval. Preachers were glad to have the honour of appealing for these two institutions; and the Committee of the last-named charity knew well how effective would be Mr. Sterne's name, when they requested him to advocate their claims on one Sunday in the first week of May.

Bishops and other dignitaries were accustomed to appeal for these orphans of the good Captain Coram, to large and fashionable audiences, The Committee, at one of their meetings, directed a notice to be inserted in the daily papers, that the Reverend Mr. Sterne would preach for the Foundlings; and on the following Sunday the chapel was filled by a large and fashionable congregation. This was on the 3rd of May; and two days afterwards the treasurer reported to the Committee, that

"the collection at the Anthem" amounted to the sum of £55 9*s.* 2*d.*" * It went round all the newspapers, though they did not know the precise amount, that "a large collection" had been the result of Mr. Sterne's appeal.

* From the Minutes of the Foundling Hospital. But a charity sermon for the Magdalens—a far more "sensational" charity—brought over a thousand pounds!

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

SHANDY HALL INTERIOR.

EARLY in July this second London Carnival must end, and Mr. Sterne had to return again to Coxwould. Seven months' absence in the year from cathedral and parochial duties, did not certainly show much clerical ardour, and supposed a very tolerant and indulgent diocesan. This, however, might be accounted for on the supposition that the latter was now on his death-bed. But Mr. Sterne seems now to have laid the future programme of his life after this pattern: the early portion of the year to be spent in London, enjoying the season, and the last portion to be spent at Coxwould, in racing through two Shandy volumes, which he meant to be his regular annual contribution, and to furnish him with the means of supporting his London campaign. "I shall write as long as I live," he wrote to a lady; and all through his books are promises of this steady two-volume yield, unless, indeed, "this vile cough kills me in the meantime." It is to be feared, indeed, that "the incense of the great," and his craving for fashionable pleasures, had completely put all

the serious duties of his profession out of his head.

A worse result still was, that it brought him back to his village in a state of restlessness and despondency, wholly unsuited to his office as a country pastor. Almost as soon as he arrived, he was pining to be back in London again. His friend Stevenson—with a little malice—had warned him, that his eyes would be turning back to the promised land. He just passed through York, and then sat down and wrote his friend a letter, pitched in the very lowest key of low spirits. Raw Yorkshire weather had set in, and "a thin death-doing, pestiferous north-east wind" was blowing in a line direct from Crazy Castle turret "full upon me." 'Tis as cold and churlish just now as (if God had not pleased it to be so) it ought to have been in bleak December, and therefore I am glad you are where you are, and where (I repeat it again) I wish I was also." He should have broken the fall, he thinks, from London, alas! to country dulness, by walking about the streets of York for ten days "before I entered on my rest. I have not managed my miseries," he adds, "like a wise man; and if God, for my consolation under them, had not poured forth the spirit of Shandyism into me, which will not suffer me to think for two moments upon any grave subjects, I would else just now lay down and die." Then he speculates on the humour of his friend at Crazy Castle, who had also his humours and hypochondriacs. He may find this letter "cursed stupid."

But that, "my dear Hall, depends much upon the *quota hora* of your shabby clock. . . . . Or if this day is obscured by dark engendering clouds—but who knows but it may be fine, and the day as fine a day as ever shone upon the earth since the destruction of Sodom. And, peradventure, your honour may have got a good hearty dinner to eat, and drank your intellectuals into a placidulish and a blandulish amalga, to bear nonsense—so much for that."

This is truly Shandean rambling. He presently breaks out—"Curse of poverty and absence from those we love; they are two great evils, which embitter all things; and yet, with the first I am not haunted much." (Something, perhaps, of Mr. Dodsley's £650 remained over, though a good deal must have been swept away in the six months' campaign). "O Lord! now are you going to Ranelagh to-night, and I am sitting sorrowful as the Prophet. When we find we can by a shifting of places run away from ourselves, what think you of a jaunt there (to Mecca), before we finally pay a visit to the Vale of Jehoshaphat—as ill-fame as we have, I trust I shall one day or other see you face to face. So tell the two Colonels, if they love good company, to live righteously and soberly as you do—and then they will have no dangers without or within them—present my warmest wishes to them, and advise the eldest to prop up his spirits, and get a rich dowager before the conclusion of the peace—why will not the advice suit both? Par nobile, &c."

The two colonels were of the hopeful guild of Crazy Castle. He then announces that the following morning he will sit down to the fifth Shandy. "I care not a curse for the critics. I'll load my vehicle with what goods *He* sends me, and they may take 'em off my hands, or let them alone. I am very valorous—and it's in proportion as we retire from the world, and see it in its true dimensions, that we despise it—no bad rant! God above bless you. You know I am your affectionate cousin,

"L. STERNE.

"What few remain of the demoniacs greet. And write me a letter, if you are able, as foolish as this."

It may be doubted if the Lord of Crazy Castle could have sent in return a letter so extraordinary, or so odd a jumble of bitterness, real or affected: so rambling, jaunty, and truly Shandean. There is a desperado air over it all which reads unpleasantly, yet we must be cautious of accepting the odd language of portions of it, for anything more than the studied conventional dialect he was in the habit of using with so intimate a friend as Hall Stevenson,—a kind of assumed recklessness, based a good deal on the wild slang of the old humorists they read together. Still the tone is painful and disagreeable. But did he despise the world from "seeing it in its true dimensions?" No bad rant, he well might call it, who was longing to be with it again.

The coronation of the king was now being celebrated over the kingdom, with unusual rejoicings,

and at Coxwould it was commemorated in true British fashion. An ox was roasted whole in the middle of the village, and the parishioners feasted on it with much enjoyment. The ox roasted whole was provided at the vicar's expense, and Mr. Sterne complains, pleasantly, that "the coronation of his Majesty, whom God preserve, has cost me the value of an ox."

But Mrs. Sterne,—now lost sight of, forgotten, left behind in all the series of London expeditions; now possibly grown more patient, dowdy, and provincial than ever,—she has long dropped out of Mr. Sterne's course. His flaming car has left her behind. Yet she would have been out of place up in London, among his fine friends. Some seventy or eighty years afterwards came a brilliant little poet,—wit, and "man of society," also,—who took pattern by the Reverend Mr. Sterne, and left his wife at a romantic little cottage down in the country, and came up himself to Lord Holland's and the London parties. Mrs. Sterne had the rustic *gaucherie* of Yorkshire upon her: and Walpole was just then describing some lady as curtseying "like a country parson's wife."

It was, in fact, the old, old story,—incompatibility; without an effort on either side to aim at even an artificial compatibility, by which a genuine harmony is sometimes brought about. On his side, a settled taste for town life and pleasures, which made him look on London as his settled home, Coxwould as a banishment. On hers, an apparent apathy, not to say

indifference, joined with a disagreeable candour, fatal to nuptial peace. We can almost hear her speaking: "As to matrimony," wrote Mr. Sterne at this time, "I should be a beast to rail at it, for my wife is easy, but the world is not; and had I stayed from her a second longer, it would have been a burning shame—*else she declares herself happier without me* —but not in anger is this declaration made, but in pure, sober good sense, built on sound experience. She hopes you will be able to strike a bargain for me before this time twelvemonth, to lead a bear round Europe: *and from this hope from you, I verily* believe it is *that you are so high in her favour at present.*" That is, from the prospect of Mr. Hall finding an opening for the removal of Mr. Sterne for a year at least. Not very long after, Mr. Sterne was bidding his reader paint the Widow Wadman "as like your mistress as you can, as *unlike your wife as your conscience will let you.*"

Yet within a month, when he had started afresh with his "Shandys," and had got more reconciled to his country life, we can look in at Coxwould on a picture that seems as domestic as could well be desired; indeed, almost pastoral in its flavour. His pen was scampering over the page, his ideas were coming fast. He was charmed with his work. Some new features in Uncle Toby's character specially pleased him. "'Tis my hobby horse, and so much am I delighted with my Uncle Toby's imaginary character, that I am become an enthusiast." A pardonable complacency, when we reflect that this

portion of labour contained the exquisite story of Le Fever, a masterpiece of true feeling and dramatic power. He was sitting at his table in the centre, "squirting" his ink about. "My Lydia helps to copy for me, and *my wife knits and listens* as I read her chapters." This is a healthier tone of conjugal manners; but still, it will be said, how could he set a child of thirteen or fourteen to copy Tristram! But this is the least of the heinous transgressions charged to Sterne. The phrase is, "*helps*" to copy; and it curiously happens that this fifth volume, upon which he was then at work, is about the most harmless of all the "Shandys." Any young lady of the present time might "help to copy it," without danger. But the truth is, as will be seen later, Mr. Sterne was jealously tender of all that concerned his Lydia; and the fact is only noticed here, because it has been made one of the popular charges against him, that he was so incredibly corrupted, as to put into his child's hands, pages that made grown-up people blush.

She had inherited from him a weak chest, and had now suffered three winters continuously from a severe asthma. His own health had not mended. This hard writing, stooping over his desk, together with the churlish Yorkshire winters, could not have fortified the "fine spun fibres" of Yorick's chest, which were perpetually giving way. Preaching, too, was a duty he could not give up, and which the rector of three parishes would scarcely be permitted to forego. It was always "fatal" to him; and this

year he did not suspend that arduous duty. Before Christmas he was "very ill" indeed—had broken a fresh vessel in his lungs, which he set to the account of hard writing in the summer, "together with preaching, which I have not strength for." These were two masters to whom he must still be bound,—"for the former is too pleasurable to be given up" (he might have added, too profitable), "and I cannot avoid the latter yet." He seems to have been at Death's door, and began to think seriously, as soon as his two new volumes were off his desk and in the hands of the public, of trying a holiday in a new scene, which would be of profit to his health and spirits, and possibly to his purse. That project of "leading a bear" across Europe; that is, taking a young gentleman of rank and property to make the grand tour; seems to have been in his mind just now. In the last century it was almost a handsome profession for clergymen of fashion and wit; and if the clergyman of wit and fashion pleased his pupil, there was sure to be certain provision for him at the next convenient vacancy among the family benefices. Thus it was rumoured that his friends the Northumberlands were looking out for "a governor" for their son, and Horace Walpole had been asked to recommend a person for the office. But Mr. Sterne, after all, was scarcely the person to be intrusted with the supervision of youth, and perhaps needed "a governor" himself. Later, he himself sketched—and sketched most dramatically—the average type of the men of this class;

and, curious to say, there is to be found in Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World" an exact pendant. They were not endowed with the solemn pedantry of the Scotch Doctor, John Moore, author of "Zeluco," who shared the postchaise of a nobleman round Europe, and wrote their travels as he went along. Here is the class of man Mr. Sterne fell in with. It is admirable.

"If wisdom can speak in no other language but Greek or Latin, you do well, or if mathematics will make a man a gentleman, or natural philosophy but teach him to make a bow, he may be of some service in introducing your son into good societies, and supporting him in them when he has done; but the upshot will be generally this, that in the most pressing occasions of address, the *unhappy youth will have the tutor to carry, and not the tutor to carry him.*

"But you will avoid this extreme, he shall be escorted by one who knows the world, not merely from books, but from his own experience, a man who has been employed on such service, and thrice made the tour of Europe *with success.* That is, without breaking his own or his pupil's neck; for if he is such as *my eyes* have seen—some broken *Swiss valet de chambre,* some general undertaker, who will perform the journey in so many months, 'IF GOD PERMIT'—much knowledge will not accrue; some profit at least, he will learn the amount to a halfpenny of every stage from Calais to Rome, he will be carried to the best inns, instructed where

there is the best wine, and sup and live cheaper than if the youth had been left to make the tour and the bargain himself. *Look at our governor! Beseech you! See, he is an inch taller as he relates the advantages.*" This odd portrait was held up to the public, not in "Tristram," nor in the "Sentimental Journey," nor in his grotesque letters,—but in the Pulpit!

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

THIRD LONDON VISIT.

WHATEVER new direction of preferment he was looking to, it would seem likely that he had given up all hope of advancement by political interest for the present. His friend Charles Townshend, and Charles Townshend's "right-hand man," Mr. V——, had all failed. So had Mr. Pitt, to whom he had so obsequiously dedicated his first "Shandys." From Lord Bute nothing was to be expected. Mr. Pitt, indeed, had just retired in disgust, with that awkward pension and "peerage for his mother," things to which no reasoning person can give the interpretation that was given to them then, even after reading over those letters of almost servile gratitude in which he acknowledged those favours. But the public resented angrily this desertion of their favourite; and the air was filled with cries and smart squibs. Mr. Sterne, with the thoughtless imprudence which was one of his fatal characteristics (he "never knew what it was to write or say one premeditated word in my whole life"), brought on the subject in Mr. Shandy's parlour. "'Take the coach-horse, and welcome.' 'But he wants

a shoe, poor creature,' said Obadiah. 'Poor creature!' said my Uncle Toby, vibrating the note back again, like a string in unison. 'Then ride the Scotch horse,' quoth my father, hastily. 'He cannot bear a saddle upon his back,' quoth Obadiah, 'for the whole world.' '*The devil's in that horse*—there, take PATRIOT,' cried my father, and shut the door. 'PATRIOT is sold,' said Obadiah. 'Here's for you!' cried my father, making a pause." The political wheel was turning very fast, and very fitfully, and less skilful eyes might have read the future with more sagacity. Before long, Mr. Pitt was once more in office. So that this "burning of his vessels," after the expenditure of a dedication, was a rash step.

On Monday, December the 21st, came forth Mr. Sterne's usual Christmas present, the fifth and sixth volumes of "Tristram Shandy," "price 4*s.* sewed," but not from the hands of the Dodsleys. Becket and De Hondt were the new sponsors, and he was to have no other publishers up to his death. We do not know the reason of this change. But the new volumes were eagerly welcomed by the public, and here was their author in company with them, up in London, once more set free. A delightful incident always in Mr. Sterne's life; and wistfully looked for with that announcement in the public newspapers. For it brought vacation—holiday—life itself; and as the books appeared—so, too, as surely appeared Mr. Sterne.

Warburton, down at Prior Park, had read them

before the 27th of the month. Since his letters of advice, we have not heard of the stormy bishop. But one who could take his counsel so defiantly as did the "heteroclite parson"; who could answer with that independent speech, "Laugh I will, my Lord, and that as loud as I can," was not likely to be acceptable to such a patron. Let any one who wishes to know the pattern of man whom he favoured, turn over the letters of his *protégé*, Hurd, and see how far an abject servility may be carried. To him Warburton wrote his opinion of the new volumes.

"Sterne has published the fifth and sixth volumes of Tristram. As to the style and matter, they are about equal to the first and second; but whether they will restore his reputation with the publick is another question. *The fellow himself is, I fear, an irrevocable scoundrel.*"

But the catalogue of Warburton's scoundrels was large indeed. And when we think of the men he placed high in his pillory, this harsh sentence on Sterne loses all its point. The same meek lips had before pronounced Smollett to be "a vagabond Scot, who wrote nonsence"; and Dodsley, to be "a wretched fellow"; had dubbed an amiable scholar and theologian, Burton, "a puppy"; Voltaire, "a scoundrel and a liar," and Priestley another "wretched fellow." He had told the House of Lords that the blackest fiends in Hell would not keep company with Wilkes when he should arrive. He found coarse names for Johnson, Walpole,—everybody, in short, that would not kiss the episcopal robe; and

therefore that "irrevocable scoundrel" does not blight Sterne's reputation beyond all appeal.

We have, however, Warburton's testimony to their being at least equal in merit to the first two volumes. Walpole wrote flippantly, they were "the dregs of nonsense"; this, too, when the "Story of Le Fever" was being copied into every journal in the kingdom. There were few dry eyes as that marvel of true pathos was read. Noble ladies wrote to Mr. Sterne, to tell him how it had affected them. The famous image of the accusing spirit was considered all but sublime by Garrick. These volumes, however, contained but too many of those little clap-trap devices with which Mr. Sterne had begun to help himself over chasms, where his own natural humour had begun to flag. Worse than all, he had begun to accept these typographical extravagances *as* real humour. And so the whole is sprinkled profusely with dashes, stars, imitations of fiddles tuning, wrong pageing (as though by a mistake of the binder) and a page utterly blank—a pendant for the black pages which marked Yorick's death. Thus we have an odd series of zigzag lines, like a meteorological registry, and gravely signed at the corners "Inv. T. S." "Scul. T. S." like a regular engraving. Thus we have "dashes" of every length, from an inch long downwards. Still, take them all in all—dashes, flourishes, and the general miscellany of such conceits—we can scarcely wish them away. Artificial as they are, they go to make up the histrionic character of the

book, and are so many scraps and patches on the harlequin's jacket. With many weak portions, and a good deal of what may be called *remplisage*, these new volumes contain some of his happiest scenes. The reception of the news of young Shandy's death—the dialogues between Mr. and Mrs. Shandy on putting Tristram into trousers—the story of Le Fever—the elaborations of my Uncle Toby's military tactics, and the council of war between him and his lieutenant—are at least equal to Mr. Sterne's best efforts and should redeem many short-comings.

In these volumes, too, is found another device to draw purchasers—the author's signature on the first page of each volume—a practice which he adhered to in each of the volumes that followed. This was not even original; as some reviewers gave out, that it had been practised by a certain authoress well-known to the public. But it was loudly advertised, and the public were bidden to take notice that "*** each book is signed by the author." It must have entailed much drudgery on Mr. Sterne, and does not seem to have increased the sale materially. If we are to accept his own statement—one of those unnecessary, injudicious statements, to which the momentary candour of Shandeism prompted him—the sale of this instalment was rather a falling off. Later on, he indiscreetly told the readers of volumes seven and eight, that he had several "cart-loads" of the two preceding volumes on hand.

He had inscribed these books to "Lord Viscount Spencer," and specially dedicates the story of Le

Fever to Lady Spencer, for which he had no other motive "which my heart has informed me of, but that the story is a humane one." The books themselves "are the best my talents, with such bad health as I have, could produce," and the whole is ushered in by some odd Latin mottoes—one from Horace, one from Erasmus, and the third from the decrees of a Council at Carthage. The one from Erasmus might be rendered thus:—"If anyone herein be traduced with more freedom than becomes a theologian, or too uncharitably for a Christian, it is not my mouth, but that of Democritus that speaks." The other passage, from the Council, was to this effect:—"If any priest or monk utter free language, and excite wanton laughter, let him be as an anathema," an injudicious introduction, and but too likely to furnish a handle to those who were watching to raise the cry of irreverence and profanity.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

MR. STERNE GOES ABROAD.

Bearing in mind the conditions under which the new volumes had been written, it is wonderful they should contain any freshness or buoyancy at all. That last winter's attack had well-nigh cut short Yorick's career, and all but stayed that stream of volumes which he hoped would run for forty years. He seems to have barely struggled through on this occasion, and as he familiarly tells his readers, when they next met again, "Death himself knocked at my door." He owned that he had a narrow escape, and it did indeed seem marvellous how that spent chest of his could rally from so many shocks. When he grew convalescent he could scarcely speak across the table to his friend Stevenson, and what he spoke of humorously as "'these two spider legs of mine' (holding one of them up to him)" were scarcely able to support him. These were serious warnings not to be treated lightly. He was himself a little frightened, and consulted his friend as to whether it would not be advisable to "fly for my life." Eugenius, if not Hall Stevenson, made his counsel more grateful by a compliment. "'Then, by Heaven,' said Tristram,

'I will lead him (Death) such a dance he little thinks of . . . . to the world's end, where, if he follows me, I pray God he may break his neck.' 'He runs more risk there,' said Eugenius, 'than *thou*.'" No wonder the allusion "brought blood into the cheek from whence it had been some months banished." Whatever will be thought of the justness of the compliment, or the propriety of reporting it, a little exaggeration may be pardoned in the charitable office of comforting an invalid. Mr. Sterne seems to have hearkened to his friend's counsel, and began to get ready for his travels.

It required all that wonderful stock of spirits with which he was happily blessed, and which daily "mounted him upon a stick, and played the fool with me nineteen hours out of the twenty-four," to help him to face the thought of a long rude journey, in the very depths of a Yorkshire Christmas. Other invalids would have shrunk from such an ordeal; but these faithful stimulants carried the invalid through, as they had done so many times before. To the end of his life they never deserted him, and served instead of friends, money, and even health itself.

On all sides, the sick Shandean seems to have met with every kindness and consideration. His new archbishop, Doctor Hay Drummond, at once excused him from all parochial work for a year, or two years—if it should be necessary: "humanely," Mr. Sterne adds, speaking of this indulgence. But a yet more serious difficulty lay in the way.

He was looking to the sunny south of France to restore his shattered chest, but the two countries were at war,—an insuperable obstacle to easy continental travelling. Still there was a kind of lull abroad, and an earnest longing for peace, under cover of which a sort of tacit, halting communication was maintained between the countries. The intercourse, too, was favoured by the struggle being carried on so far away from the actual territory of the belligerents. It was understood that peace was not very far off, and about the middle of the preceding year France had actually put forward offers, in a tone more humble than she had used before. Many English of quality had already got as far as Paris,—the first division of their grand tour; and some were staying there for the season, affiliated to the societies of that brilliant capital. A little interest would smooth away all difficulties as to passports; and Mr. Sterne, casting about for some powerful interest, thought of his "Tristram" dedication, and the great Mr. Pitt. The favour was one of no very special magnitude, but it was graciously accorded, with "good breeding and good nature," as he described it. The road was now open to him, and he might depart when he pleased.

His friends, knowing his careless Shandean turn, must have thought him ill-suited to travelling alone in a strange country. And we may accept that little story, as true, which he tells us of his friend Hall's taking him aside and asking him how he was

situated as to funds. "I have enough in conscience," said I. "Indeed, Yorick, you have not," replied Eugenius, "I know France and Italy better than you." "But you do not consider, Eugenius," said I, refusing his offer, "that before I have been three days in Paris I shall take care to say or do something or other for which I shall get clapped up in the Bastille, and that I shall live there a couple of months, entirely at the King of France's expense." "I beg pardon," said Eugenius, drily; "really I had forgot that entirely."

He had thought of a hurried trip down to Bath, possibly for the waters; but gave up the idea. He had hoped, also, to tempt his friend Stevenson to join him. But the latter was getting his Crazy tales ready for the press, and could not go.

Just as he was setting upon looking over his finances, he found was "twenty pounds short," and wrote plainly, and even bluntly, to Garrick, "Will you lend me this sum? yours, L. S." Garrick sent it at once; and three years after, when Garrick himself was travelling abroad, the actor got very disturbed about this sum, which he had not as yet been repaid; and wrote home nervously about it. "I hope Becket has stood my friend about what he ought to have received for me some time ago. I had a draught upon him from Sterne, ever since he went abroad: pray hint this to him, but tell him not to be *ungentle with Sterne*." Every glimpse we have of this admirable artist seems to show him in the same amiable

character,—yet always tempered with a steady good sense and firmness.

The very outset of this journey is quite characteristic. He confides to us the story of his abrupt departure with a pleasant confidence, shifting it into the Sentimental Journey. "I had left London," he says, "with so much precipitation, that it never entered my mind that we were at war with France; and had reached Dover, and looked through my glass at the hills beyond Boulogne, before the idea presented itself, that there was no getting there without a passport. *Go but to the end of a street, I have a mortal aversion for returning back no wiser than I set out.*" So he got a young French count, whom he had known in London, to take him in his train as far as Calais. This noisy pair of Shandeans would have enlivened the French post-roads. Mrs. Sterne and his daughter were to join him later at Paris. Finally, all was arranged; and about Twelfth-day his chaise was at the door. "*Allons,*" said I, "the post-boy gave a crack with his whip, off I went like a cannon, and at half-a-dozen bounds got to Dover."

The regular mail-boats departed, from both sides, only twice in the week. But small vessels were to be hired at any time, when the wind served; the exclusive use of one being secured for about five guineas. He hurried down to Dover, as we have seen, "at half-a-dozen bounds," and "never gave a peep into Rochester Church, or took notice of the dock at Chatham, or visited St. Thomas at Canterbury,

though they all three lay in my way." He was very ill on the passage, "sick as a horse." "What a brain! Upside down—hey dey! The cells are broke loose into one another, and the blood, and the lymph, and the nervous juices, with the fix'd and volatile salts, are all jumbled into one mass." A faithful description: for the "Packets" were no more than open pilot or fishing boats, of small tonnage, and wretched interior accommodation, which, too, was to be enjoyed at exorbitant and extortionate charges.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

ON THE ROAD TO PARIS.

Over the incidents of the old posting journeys from Calais up to Paris hangs a picturesque cloud. They are full of colour and good scenic effect. The elements are all gay and pleasant to think on; the long straight roads, with the rude paved causeway in the centre; the interminable files of trees; the old posting-houses, always welcome, and the halt; the gay, quaint towns, of which there were but hurried glimpses—like a scene at the Opera; the canals; the snatches of fortification; the women peasants in white caps and sabots, along the market road; the men peasants, in woollen liberty caps, blouses, and sabots also; the douaniers, and the awful gendarmes, who suggest the drama of Robert Macaire. We may put in, too, the huge vehicle itself—the monster ark upon wheels—built up with mountains of luggage, reeling and swaying; a huge, ricketty, shabby, yellow argosy, all over dried dirty mud splashes, which toils up tremendous hills behind its string of horses, and leaves the music of bells behind. Wonderful, too, are those Normandy horses, round,

dappled, shining, sprinkled with chocolate, snowy white, pink-nosed, long-tailed, kicking, lunging recklessly, shrieking, and biting each other's flanks; flinging their hind legs over the ropes; in frosty weather crashing down upon the ice in a living heap, only to be scourged again to their feet by the terribly sacrilegious being who sits aloft, holding the reins and discharging imprecations. Picturesque the postilions and estafettes, with the glazed shining hats, the gay, embroidered jackets, and the huge boots, like a species of leathern tub. Picturesque the motley company of the rotonde, the coupé, the intérieur, and the more humble accommodation of the roof; the priests, soldiers, laymen, and commis-voyageurs, who were lifted up and set down at many stages. Picturesque the changing of the Normandy horses; the halting by night at the Barriere, when the lanterns flashed upon sleepy faces inside, and gruff gendarme voices demanded passports. But, side by side with the picturesqueness, rises the memory of grievous and most painful discomfort, of weary nights, acute suffering from the rude stone blocks over which the heavy machine was dragged, and actual torture from the cramped position of the limbs; uneasy snatches of sleep, procured by the agency of the strap that hung from the roof, and on which the sufferer, leaning his elbow, sought a temporary relief and a disturbed dream.

The whole economy of this "service" remained curiously unchanged up to yesterday, as it were,

when the Chemin de Fer du Nord was opened. Such of our generation as went up to Paris painfully in the "machines" of the Messrs. Lafitte, saw through the dim and jingling window panes, pretty much what Mr. Sterne saw, when he was posting on his first tour. From the prints and pictures of his day, and from the books of travel of his time, we find the same colours, the same effects and decorations; the same stagey estafettes, and the wild Normandy horses. At this very day we turn into the old-fashioned inn yard, in the Rue Notre Dame des Victoires, and see lying up there in ordinary, the yellow wrecks of these ancient conveyances, in shape and pattern such as we see them in the prints.

The most famous of these in Mr. Sterne's day was the Great Lyons Diligence, well-known in many dramas and stories. For convenience and speed it was considered a marvel—travelling in summer at the rate of sixty miles a day, completing the whole journey in five days.* The Calais Diligence, not quite so well appointed, set down its jaded passengers in seven days.† This, however, did not include night travelling, a later and inconvenient tribute to the necessities of quicker communication.

No one was so fitted as Mr. Sterne to relish these new associations. He had a perfect instinct for all things French; both in tone, colour, and feeling. His account of his French travels has a marvellous French flavour; is racy of the air, and

* "Almanach Parisien," 1764.

† "Nouveau Voyageur de France," 1780.

colour, and fragrance of French dress and manners and thought. The change from the rough practical Yorkshire life must have been inexpressibly welcome. His sketches of the old towns are dashed in as oddly and as quaintly, as are their projecting gables and twisted streets.

He entered Calais when it was "dusky in the evening," and left it betimes in the morning, when it was "dark as pitch," so he could see but little of that postern of France. Later, however, he was to come with his Shandean brush, and sketch it in. Still, he gives it an amusing descriptive chapter, founded on "the little my barber told me of it as he was whetting his razor;" and on a useful traveller's handbook, called the "*Nouveau Voyageur de France*," by one "Pignaniol de la Force," which he must have had in his *malle*, and which must have been open before him when he wrote. His Calais chapter, put together in the true guide-book fashion, is a very pleasant satire on the crowd of travellers who "wrote and gallop'd," or who even "wrote galloping," and deluged the British public with inventories of all they saw. In a cantering fashion the new traveller puts together *his* inventory of the town he never saw. It is amusing to see how accurately he has copied M. de la Force's book, with its meagre guide-book tales about Eustace de St. Pierre, and the number of inhabitants, and convents, and the exact measurement of the "great square," which, "strictly speaking, to be sure it is not, because 'tis forty feet longer from east to west,

than from north to south;" and how he even leads off with the same antiquarian flourish of "CALAIS, *Calatium, Calusium,*" where, however, with his common inaccuracy in spelling, he has put Calusium for *Calesium.*

There were no less than three posting routes to Paris then in favour, "in behalf of which there is so much to be said by the several deputies from the towns which lie along them, that half a day is easily lost in settling which you'll take." First, that by Lisle and Arras, which is the most about, but "the most interesting and instructing." Second, that by Amiens, "which you may go, if you would see Chantilly."

"And that by Beauvais, which you may go if you will."

"For this reason a great many choose to go by Beauvais."

The French guide gives these three routes also. But the regular route was by Amiens, not because "you would see Chantilly," but because the straightest and best kept. And so it continued down to the days of the Chemin de Fer du Nord.

He got out a chaise, and began to post with all speed to Boulogne, between which place and Calais a shattered diligence still trails the traveller along. He got to that gay motley town early on the morning of his first day in France, and saw from the windows of his chaise the odd and doubtful miscellany of his own countrymen, who found it a happy refuge. The sun was rising and glistening

on the bright colours of the town as he clattered by, and he marked the speculative glances directed at the new arrival. "'Tis for high treason,' quoth a very little man, whispering as low as he could to a very tall man that stood next him. 'Or else for murder,' quoth the tall man." He put up to breakfast at an inn, the host of which was an Irishman, and from the window of which, while breakfast was being got ready, he caught one of those graceful female sketches, at which he was so skilful. "'*Ah! mon chère fille,*' said I, as she tripped by from her matins, 'you look as rosy as the morning, (for the sun was rising, and it made the compliment more gracious). She made a court'sy to me; I kiss'd my hand. 'No, it can't be,' quoth a fourth, 'tis debt,' continued he. 'Tis certainly for debt,' quoth a fifth." And then, thinking of his weary passage, and his illness, he recalls the "debt of nature," and conjures her to "stop that death-looking long-striding scoundrel of a scare sinner, who is posting after me, 'do, dear lady.'" Upon which his Irish host, thinking that this is still addressed to the young French girl tripping to matins, interposes with the good humour of his countrymen. "'Now, in troth, 'tis a great pity that all this good courtship should be lost, for the young gentlewoman has been after going out of hearing it all along.'"

These are not many strokes, yet the whole is a picture; and there is a breath and fragrance which commends itself to one who will turn back and think of his own first bright morning in France.

He was gone presently, with fresh horses. He has all the anxiety of convalescence to get forward, but is fretted by amusing delays. "What's wrong now? *Diable!* a rope's broke! a knot has slipt! a staple's drawn! a bolt's to whittle,* or tag, or rag, or jag, or strap, or buckle, or a buckle's tongue, wants altering." There was much getting up and down, and he had soon discovered two axioms in the matter of posting: "*That something is always wrong in a French postchaise upon first setting out, or a French postilion has always to alight before he has got three hundred yards out of town.*" Then the postboy gets down to fetch out "his luncheon of black bread, which he had cramm'd in the chaise pocket, and was remounted, and going leisurely on to relish it the better. 'Get on, my lad,' said I, briskly, but in the most harmonious tone imaginable, for I jingled a four-and-twenty sous piece against the glass, taking care to hold the flat side of it towards him as he looked back; the dog grinned intelligence from his right ear to his left." And so they clattered into Montreuil—famous Montreuil of a Sentimental Journey—than which no town in all France "looks better on the map;" and which now furnished Mr. Sterne with another Watteau female sketch; viz. of the innkeeper's daughter, who "if the evening be fine in passing through Montreuil you will see at your chaise door as you change horses. She has been eighteen months at Amiens and six at Paris, in going through her classes; so

* A Yorkshire expression.

knits, and sews, and dances, and does her little coquetries very well. She was working at the door of the inn, and, in running them over within these five minutes that I have stood looking at her, she has let fall at least a dozen loops in a white thread stocking. Yes, yes, I see, you cunning gipsey! 'tis long and taper—you need not pin it to your knee—and that 'tis your own, and fits you exactly."

Leaving Janatone at her inn door, he passed on, and by his "Book of French Post Roads, page 36, journeyed

"*de Montreuil à Nampont, poste et demi;*
de Nampont à Bernay, poste;
de Bernay à Nouvion, poste;
de Nouvion à ABBEVILLE, *poste;*"

At Nampont, the well-known picture of the dead donkey—to become famous later; but Abbeville disgusted him by its wretched inn. At Abbeville, too, he entertained that dismal meditation on the manner of his death, which he would prefer "at some decent inn," where "the few cold offices I wanted would be purchased with a few guineas," and not at his own home, among his family; a wish, it will be seen, but too faithfully fulfilled. All along his journey he indeed took with him such dismal broodings, over the "long-striding scoundrel of a scare sinner," whom he was flying from. Disgusted with his Abbeville inn, he was gone at four in the morning. And "with the thill horse trotting, and a sort of up-and-down of the other, we danced it along to *Ailly au Clochers*, famed in days of yore for the finest

chimes in the world. . . . . and so making all possible speed from—

Ailly au Clochers, I got to *Hixcourt*;*
from *Hixcourt* I got to *Pequignay*, and
from *Pequignay* I got to *Amiens*."

But at night, when the weary traveller was struggling for a little sleep, a train of comic troubles set in; among which was "the incessant returns of paying for the horses at every stage, with the necessity thereupon of putting your hand into your pocket, and counting from thence three livres fifteen sous (sous by sous)." Every six miles (a post), or at most every nine (a post and a-half), he was roused up from that sleep, which "covers a man like a cloak," had to let down the window, admit the cold night air, and the flare of a lantern. "'I'll be even with them' quoth I;" and he thought of putting up the exact sum in a piece of paper, and holding it in his hand ready. "'Now, I shall have nothing to do,' said I, composing myself to rest, 'but to drop this gently into the postboy's hat, and not say a word.'" This was but an idle delusion; for "there wants two sous more to drink! or there is a twelve sous piece of Louis XIV., which will not pass; or a livre and some odd liards to be brought over from the last stage, which monsieur had forgot. Still is sweet sleep retrievable." But when it comes to a dispute about a post, or a post and a-half, the book must be pulled out and consulted, "the print of which is so very small it forces you to open your eyes, whether

* Flixcourt is the proper spelling.

you will or no;" a hopeless wakefulness begins to set in steadily. "Then monsiur *le Curé* offers you a pinch of snuff, or a poor soldier shows you his leg, or a shevaling his box," all substantial aids to the rational powers being thoroughly awakened.

The "shevaling" (or, more correctly, shaveling) came later, at Calais, and exchanged with him a yet more famous box. The fact is, the present journey, though not officially ticketed as such, was in truth a sort of Sentimental Journey; and for pictures and sketches, and general tone, is very like that more known journey he made later.

Thus, he got on to Chantilly, where he saw the famous stables of the Prince of Condé, hurried through St. Denis without turning his head ("richness of their treasury! stuff and nonsense!")—took a postilion there "in a tawny yellow jerkin, turned up with red calimanco," and late of a January evening, at nine o'clock, this "man, with a pale face and clad in black," heard the rough Paris pavement clattering under his chaise heels, and the whip of the calimanco postilion sounding "crack, crack! —crack, crack!" and saw the "villanously narrow" streets flitting by, but dimly lighted, however, and kept saying to himself "So, this is *Paris!*—and this is *Paris!*—humph!—*Paris!* the first, the finest, the most brilliant. The streets, however, are nasty." And the pale man in black was taken; still clattering —still crack, crack!—through the narrow winding turns of the Quartier St. Denis—he, looking out with a sort of dazed wonder at what flitted by.

"One—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine—ten; ten cookshops! and twice the number of barbers! and all within three minutes' driving." A savour, too, of soup and salad, salad and soup, wafted in at the window—and the people passing, as well as they can be made out in the dark by the flare of lanterns at the corner, seem all to wear swords. This was his first glimpse of Paris. Most faithful and true to nature is the description, as those who recall their first entrance into a strange foreign town will acknowledge. Some such exceptional oddity—as the rows of cook-shops and barbers, the savour of soup—always takes hold of the mind and lingers. Most graphic is the whole journey, which we seem to have made with Mr. Sterne up from Calais, and to be now resting with him his first night in Paris.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

OLD PARIS AND ITS SOCIETY.

THE old Paris of 1762, through which Mr. Sterne was driven the night of his arrival, was the old Paris of the novels and the theatres; a mass of new glittering palaces and *Places*, set down in a huge wilderness of dark, narrow, winding streets, dangerous alleys, and *culs de sac*. Apart from the more splendid trophies of the building pomp and luxury of the Louis', it was a tremendous gathering of dangerous "quarters," these "quarters" being made of tall black tenements—old, crazy, and tottering—grim as prisons, and each swarming with a gaunt, squalid, famished population—the whole caked and crusted together in one corrupt mass. It was a vast French St. Giles's, or Seven Dials, where the elements for the outburst of the Revolution were already seething and working. There were bridges across the Seine: and on those bridges were crammed together tall, tottering houses, as in the days of Old London Bridge. All through those nine hundred streets which Mr. Sterne counted, and which he found so "villanously narrow, that there is not room to turn a wheel-barrow," was a miasma of frightful odours,

for there was no attempt at sanitary organisation; and the churches were becoming almost intolerable from the overcrowded churchyards in the very heart of the city. The light and air of these narrow streets was intercepted by a whole perspective of swinging sign-boards, which creaked dismally, and sometimes descended with a crash from their crazy fittings—for the shops were as yet undistinguished by numbers; but every one was to be found at the *Cordon Bleu*, or the *Barbe d'Argent*, or *Fleur-de-Lys*.* And just as Mr. Sterne had remarked, when he drove in, the signs most frequent were those of the perruquier and the cookshop; those of the perruquier being yet more frequent than those of the cookshops. All Paris was dancing and fiddling upon a volcano, and twelve hundred *friseurs*, assisted by six thousand aides-de-camp, dressed the hair of Paris *à la mode*. He remarked, too, the dim light at nights—which made those nine hundred streets so dangerous, for they were lit with some eight thousand candles in damaged lanterns, which went out every now and again with a gust, and left all in darkness. He remarked, too, the miserable "lean horses" which drew the *fiacres*; poor broken-down beasts from the stables of princes and seigneurs. But he might also have noticed the splendid equipage of the seigneurs—a gorgeous coach, of a heavy massive build, as was fashionable, drawn by

* These details are from Mercier's *Tableau de Paris*—that most graphic of panoramas; and which, though written some years later than Mr. Sterne's visit, is in a great measure retrospective.

six horses, imported from Flanders or England (as was also fashionable), flying through these narrow streets at full speed. This dangerous pace was the *ton*—and was very significant of the relation of the nobles to the miserable serfs who formed the people of France. For many were thrown down at corners, and killed or mutilated, and the ear was deafened with bewildering shouts of "*Gare! gare!*" Lolling in such state was often to be seen the bloated figure of the *nouveau riche*, the "Farmer-General," grown opulent by absorbing the juices and marrow of a whole province.

A hundred thousand strangers swarmed up annually to Paris. The great Louis rode his bronze charger in the middle of Mansard's stately Place Vendôme, and they were busy setting up the reigning king and another brazen steed in a new *Place*. Never was there such splendour, such feasting, and such gaiety: such squalor, such misery, and such gloom. No wonder that Mr. Sterne, when looking up at the boastful inscription on the Louvre, should have translated it Shandeistically—

> "Earth's no such folks—no folks e'er such a town—
> As Paris is? Sing derry, derry down!"

The social and intellectual state of refined Paris at this moment was highly curious. Just now had set in the reign of the philosophers, and that odd affectation of liberality and democracy which it became the rage to wear, even among the most exclusive circles, like one of the new fashionable head-dresses. And though the Encyclopædia had

been suppressed, the Diderots and D'Alemberts, and D'Holbachs, fortified by a crowd of intellectual queens of society, gave laws in many a salon. But there was a still more propitious tone to welcome Mr. Sterne's arrival. A frantic Anglomania had set in, which broke out in every way that a mania could manifest itself, taking the shape of monstrous extravagances in hats, wigs, and other articles of dress; also in a preference for articles of a solid English shape and pattern; and, more abstractedly, in a passion for English works of fiction and philosophy, which were translated wholesale. Madame Riccoboni, one of the most industrious of these purveyors, was kept in full work, and supplied Tom Fielding's Amelia, and other works, in a French dress; to say nothing of some ridiculous romances, such as "Miladi Catesby," conceived upon English lines and models. But this was no more than an affectation, and that these works were never seriously studied may be well conceived. There was an extravagance in everything; everything was taken up with exaggeration. There was an unhealthy fever and fitfulness in the fashionable taste, very significant of the state of society.

Two special subjects were devouring the fashionable world when Mr. Sterne plunged into Paris. The "affaire" (everything swelled to the dimensions of an "affaire") of the Jesuits, and the "affaire" of the Theatres. The Jesuits were being hunted to destruction, with a fury that seems now almost unaccountable — King, Parliament, nobles, and

citizens, all joining in the cry. It seemed to be a sort of phobia. The "affaire" of the theatres was a project which had been started for uniting the Opéra Comique, about which all the world was raving, to the "Italiens," where, curious to say, French pieces were acted. This notable change was debated and opposed with all the heat and fury about an insignificant object which is so characteristically French. It was, more specially than at any previous season, the reign of gossip, intrigue, splendour, absurdity, trifling, wit, folly, imposture, and licentiousness. Above all, there was a certain tone of Shandeism rife. In short, the extraordinary pantomime, which a few pages' reading in the memoirs of the day will help any one to reconstruct for himself, must have been singularly attractive to one of Mr. Sterne's tone of thought, and taste for all that was odd and whimsical.

Not less welcome was he to the French, than they to him. He was a Lion to begin with, and above all an English Lion. He was at once, with scarcely an hour's delay, plunged into the crowd of the wits, philosophers, deists, actors, courtiers, and abbés. He was in the salons in a moment. The doors were thrown open for him. His friend Garrick, who was known to many there, had no doubt stood his sponsor here as he had in London. But in truth he found hosts of friends already on the spot. Here was Mr. Fox and Mr. Macartney, who afterwards went to China and became Sir George, and Lord Macartney, and a whole cloud of "English of

distinction." Tristram, not translated yet, nor to have that honour for many years to come, had travelled to Paris before him, and was prodigiously talked of, if not read. With their characteristic politeness, the new Lion was at least made to believe that his book was being devoured by eager Parisians of quality, but of all books in the world it was least likely to be intelligible to a Frenchman.

No wonder that he should write home in a tumult of rapture of the flatteries and distinctions with which he was welcomed. He had been there little more than a week when the current of dinners, the inevitable shape the popular homage was to assume, began to flow; and he was already bound in pleasant dining shackles a fortnight deep. It was the old London story over again; but there was here a new feature, not found in his London programmes—the "little suppers." There was the little difficulty about his passports, but when such great people as the Count de Limbourgh and Baron d'Holbach had offered the Prime Minister Choiseul "any security for the inoffensiveness of my behaviour in France, which is more than you will do, you rogue!" it may be conceived everything was soon made smooth. There seems to have been a real difficulty about his passports, for, as has been mentioned, he had started before Peace had been formally arranged between the countries. And very many pleasant scenes in the Sentimental Journey—the journey to Versailles to see the Minister, and the interview with the Shaksperian nobleman,

who took him for Hamlet's Yorick,—must be shifted back to this first visit. So, too, with his description of the little arts by which he made his way in French society,—how he won over the old Marshal Biron, and Madame* de G., and Madame de Vence, the young Count de Faineant; and without which he could never have been invited to M. Popelinière the great Farmer-General's concerts.* The Count de Bissie begged that he might be introduced to him, and when Mr. Sterne paid him his complimentary visit, he discovered him actively reading Tristram. "An odd incident," Mr. Sterne calls it, and no doubt flattering, but to a later posterity eminently French. This nobleman showed him many civilities, and even allowed him a sort of private admission through his own apartments, to see the Orleans Gallery. But by the Baron d'Holbach he was treated with special honours as Garrick's friend, as well as for his own merits. His establishment was supported splendidly, his house was thrown open three days in the week, and was filled with all "the wits and the scavans who are no wits."

To Garrick he wrote with boyish rapture of all these honours. He was charmed with everything. His health was marvellously restored for the short time, though he was "somewhat worse in the intel-

* He merely passed through Paris when on the Sentimental Journey, and by that time was perfectly at home there. He had not time, therefore, to be "making his way" in society, as he describes. A later letter, too, shows that this was the season he was attending the Farmer-General's concerts.

lectuals, for my head is turned round with what I see, and the unexpected honours I have met with here. He writes a whole catalogue of all his doings. He has been to the doctors of the Sorbonne. He was just starting with Mr. Fox for Versailles. He had been the night before with Mr. Fox to see Clairon at the Opéra Comique, in *Iphigénie*, one of her grand parts; and it was natural that one of his theatrical taste should be enchanted with her magnificent acting. "Would to God," he writes, "you had one or two like her. What a luxury to see you with one of such powers in the same interesting scene." A luxury which some Parisian circles actually enjoyed the following year when Garrick visited the capital, and with Clairon, gave recitations at a few select houses. He had also seen Preville, and was delighted with that wonderful actor, whose talents would seem to have been of the Lemaitre pattern—a *spécialité* of the French stage. So delighted was he, that he with "fifteen or sixteen English of distinction" joined together in taking a couple of boxes, which gave them the right of selecting a special piece for the night. They chose his *cheval de bataille*, "The Frenchman in London," in which he was to "send us all home to supper, *happy*."* "Ah, Preville," said Mr. Sterne, "thou art Mercury himself." So admirable

* This was an old piece, acted so far back as 1727. It was one of a class; for the original was imitated in various shapes. There was "*Le François à Francfort*," "The Englishman in Paris," played in London in the year 1760, "The Frenchified Lady never in Paris," &c.

was he in turns and changes of gesture and action. "Mercury" would seem to have been a happy personification of his peculiar style. For, according to a critic who had often seen him act, he was an actor "*au bout des doigts*," and from his graphic and grotesque attitudes, the very "Callot of the stage.* But besides this, the "*Mercure Galant*" was a famous part of Preville's, in which he exhibited marvellous versatility, and of which an eye witness has left us a good photograph.† It was in this very piece that Mr. Sterne saw him play. He must have known and met this Preville often. For later, when Foote and Sterne were in Paris, the great English actor used to have the great French actor to supper at his hotel, and the Frenchman would give imitations of his brethren, to the great delight of a young fencer, who was also invited.‡ The French actor, too, used to have suppers for Garrick, with Clairon, and other notorieties.§

Mr. Sterne says he could write his friend "six volumes of what has passed comically in this great scene these fourteen days," and we can accept his statement. We could wish too that even some little instalment of what had passed so comically, had come down to us in a few hasty Shandean jottings. He had been introduced to Mr. Foley, of the firm

* Mémoires Secrets," vol. i

† Attributed to Garrick himself. It is to be found in his "Correspondence."

‡ See Angelo's "Letters."

§ Garrick's "Letters."

of Foley and Panchaud, whom the fashionable patronised in banking matters, and found Foley "an honest soul." The banker had of course been very accommodating to the friend of Mr. Fox and of the "fifteen or sixteen English of distinction." In short he winds up a letter written after one fortnight's stay, in tumultuous spirits, with a hope, that in a fortnight more he would "break through, or retire from the delights of this place, which in the *scavoir vivre* exceeds all the places, I believe, in this section of the globe."

This anticipation reads amusingly, when we find that he could not break his chains of roses for nearly six months afterwards. The *scavoir vivre* proved only too seductive. And his delight with everything found a vent in the introduction into this first letter of little scraps of French, such as "'tis *comme à Londres*," &c.

He was now driving about in state, and was already in sober black, decently mourning with the court. For the exaggerated millinery of grief was one of the features of the time: and the whole population of the city, even the tradespeople of a crowned head, passed through all the graduated degrees of "grand deuil" to "petit deuil," like the seigneurs of the court. And while at times he drove about in his *fiacre*,—which cost him a good many livres' hire in the day, and was seen looking from its window, a pale thin Englishman in a suit of black; at other seasons, we may be sure, he found his way to the quais, where old books were sold, and began to

bouquiner with his old zest. Mr. Heber had a copy of the Shandean "*Serèes*," well thumbed, and with this inscription, "*L. Sterne, à Paris*, 8 *livres*." And when Mr. Wilkes was in Paris, Mr. Sterne presented him with a copy of Barbou's fine edition of "Catullus," which was sold with the rest of that gentleman's books.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

MR. STERNE IN THE SALONS.

In six weeks more he was still lingering at Paris, had been introduced to "one half of their best goddesses, and in a month more, shall be admitted to the shrines of the other half." His odd eccentric style of speech and manner had been much relished, and being now firmly established, and knowing his ground, he gave full scope to his humour. He used to "Shandy it away fifty times more than I was ever wont, 'and talk more nonsense than ever you heard me talk in your days,' and to all sorts of people." He could boast that he had "converted many into Shandeism." Scraps of his speech and general oddity struck on the Minister Choiseul's ear, who was heard asking (in better French than Mr. Sterne reported it), "*Qui le diable est ce homme là?*" "*C'est Chevalier Shandy.*" He had, he was told, heard of those "ten thousand things I cannot write," and of "those thousand things I do which cut no figure but in the doing." A greater compliment still was paid him than merely exciting the curiosity of a prime minister. The Duke of Orleans had formed an odd collection of the

portraits of some "odd men," which made a sort of department in his famous collection; and an artistic gentleman who lived with him, got Mr. Sterne to sit for a full-length, to add to the eccentric catalogue. It was considered a most "expressive" likeness.* It was intended that there should be an etching done of this picture, but there are no traces discoverable of either etching or original. It would have been curious to set the Frenchman's beside the famous "portrait of Sir Joshua's."

Garrick was naturally anxious to know the state of the French stage. That tremendous question of the union of the two theatres was now in every one's mouth. Scraps and snatches of coarse green-room scandal absorbed the wrapt attention of the great metropolis. Every one was greedy for details of that affair of the notorious Mdlle. Arnaud, who had just broken off with the Count Lauragais: and every one was enjoying the rejected admirer's transports of despair. Every one, too, was admiring the chivalrous behaviour of the actress, who had refused to accept any pecuniary allowance; and the exquisite chivalry of the Countess de Lauragais, who had herself implored the actress to accept the small offering the generosity of her husband would force upon her. The struggle between the two ladies was considered exquisitely sublime.† But the union of the theatres was made almost a party question.

* This portrait is not to be found in the gorgeously illustrated "Orleans Gallery."

† See the curious diary of Paris life before quoted, entitled "Mémoires Secrets," vol. i.

"The whole city of Paris," wrote Mr. Sterne, "is bewitched with the Comick Opera, and if it was not for the affairs of the Jesuits, which take up one half our talk, the Comick Opera would have it all." To a mercurial temper, this harping on one subject soon became "a tragical nuisance; and was it not for some sudden starts and dashes of Shandeism which now and then either breaks the thread, or entangles it so that the Devil himself would be puzzled in winding it off, I should die a martyr." Whose were the starts of Shandeism, we may easily conceive. The union of the two houses was carried out in that very month, and the subject then was changed.

On the stage, however, there was nothing which "gives the nerves so smart a blow as the great characters in the hands of Garrick! but I forgot—I am writing to the man himself." Along with this adroit bit of flattery, he sent the "Salon" (spelt *sallon*) a stupid satire of Piron's (the Piron, "*qui ne fut rien, Pas même académicien*")—and which a critic of the hour dismissed as containing nothing either "*neuf ou de piquant.*" He also sent a bundle of Comic Operas. About Clairon, who reigned at the French Comedy, where "they act scarce any thing but tragedies," the great English actor would naturally be curious: the most exaggerated reports of her powers had reached England. Whatever were her gifts, she seems to have exercised the same magic influence as Rachel later: the mere announcement of her name in the play-

bills being sufficient to crowd the box-office. She was now acting in some revivals of Voltaire's tragedies, and was considered greatly improved since the time when Garrick first saw her. She, with Dumenil—an actress who would have been great in her own line but for an unfortunate infirmity, to which too many tragedians have been subject—and Preville kept up the theatre. Clairon also welcomed all the world, and Mr. Sterne, to her house on Thursdays, "when *she gives to eat* (as they say here) to all that are hungry and dry." She more astonished than delighted Mr. Sterne. Her style was often the usual French declamatory pattern; which it requires French training to appreciate. "I cannot bear preaching," he said; "I fancy I got a surfeit of it in my younger days." Walpole came to Paris three years later, missed seeing "the Clairon," but admired her rival Dumenil; and skilful judges at that time placed her above Clairon. By that time, too, it was the *Philosophers* who had taken to preaching. Preville he found "admirable in low comedy;" and he thought "charming" the odd mixture of Italian comedy and music which was in vogue at Preville's theatre.

On the 19th of March, he wrote to his friend that he was to be entertained that night by going specially to see a tragedy damned. "Peace be with it, and the gentle brain that made it." He gives no further particulars of this intended holocaust; but from other sources, we arrive curiously at the identification of this piece and "the gentle brain that

made it,"—which was already doomed, the very morning of its performance. It was the *Eponine*, and its author was a young M. Cabannes, who had, unhappily for himself, been pushed forward by Court interest, to the prejudice of other dramatic authors. Cabals had been formed in the Royal ante-chamber. The gallant Richelieu had been with the King about it. Clairon, at first disgusted with her part, with all the fitfulness of an actress, had now taken it up with "*fureur.*" It was at last fixed for this 19th of March, when Mr. Sterne was anticipating such a pleasant evening,—but at the last moment was withdrawn.*

The fortnight, which at the end of January was to have been the furthest term of his stay, had stretched to the middle of April, and he had not moved. He was enraptured with the place and his reception. He was "charmed" and "*extasiè*," for at this time everything here was hyperbolized, "and if a woman is but simply pleased 'tis *je suis charmèe*, and if she is charmed 'tis nothing less than she is *ravi*-sh'd . . . ." He could enjoy his amusements with far more relish—for his short stay had already been attended with wonderful results upon his health. "Your prayer for me of *rosy health*," he wrote to his friend, "is heard. If I stay here for three or four months, I shall return more than reinstated." An anticipation

* "Mémoires Secrets," vol. i. Later on it was again thrust forward and obtained a hearing, but failed miserably, as might, indeed, be expected.

which might have been justified, did it not seem likely that what the change of scene and season repaired, the round and racket of dissipation as steadily brought back to the old feebleness. It does, indeed, seem likely, that the air of Paris in the depth of winter, with the unwholesome accompaniments of balls and suppers, would have had a very serious influence on his physical constitution. It was the wonderfully mercurial tone of his spirits which, in a new scene, and among new and livelier objects, carried him triumphantly over the drawbacks of a rude climate and an enfeebled chest.

The Lent brought with it "a vile suspension" and utter interruption of all dramatic amusements; and then, to Mr. Sterne's delight, the run of plays and operas set in again. Still, it was the tragedy vein that was in favour: and the stilted declamation of the French school. "Here the comic actors were never so low—the tragedians hold up their heads —in all senses." They had no versatile actor who could play Abel Drugger and a gloomy tragedy the same evening, like "*one little man*"—who supported "the theatrical world like a David Atlas."

This compliment accompanied a little request for patronage in Garrick's own department. Mr. Sterne had met a literary "lady of talent" in Paris, who had taken the trouble of translating and adapting Diderot's drama of *Le Fils Naturel*. He does not give her name, but we can have no difficulty in identifying her. For some three or four years later there was a certain Irish "Mrs. E. Griffith" persecuting

Mr. Garrick in London on the score of this very "Fils Naturel;" piteously importuning him in many letters, to bring out both this and other adapted dramas of Diderot's. Mr. Sterne did not think very highly of it, considering the speeches too long and savouring of "preaching," and, strange to say, he objected to it because it had "too much sentiment." He not only interceded with Garrick, but also tried to induce Becket, his own publisher, to take it up, apparently without success. It does not appear that the "Natural Son, or the Triumph of Virtue," ever succeeded in reaching the stage or the press, though later, Garrick seems to have thought it might have suited his theatre. Mr. Sterne had the disagreeable duty of reading through the "sentiment" and the "preaching,"—which must have been out of compliment to Diderot, whose friend she was.

The friend of Garrick wrote to Garrick how much he was "talked of here, and much expected as soon as the peace will let you: these last two days you have happened to engross the whole conversation at two great houses where I was at dinner." These little compliments may have had some share in precipitating the tragedian's visit which took place the next year; and during which he wrote home a chronicle of dinners, and general honours, curiously like Mr. Sterne.

Very many were the "great houses" at which Mr. Sterne was made welcome. On March the 14th, the Baron de Bagge gave a concert, with the

choicest music and company that could be got in Paris, and here the odd English Mr. Shandy was to be seen. On the following night, the Prince de Conti had a party, and Mr. Sterne was there also. There was an opulent Farmer-General, who kept a standing corps of musicians and actors in his house, and gave concerts and plays alternately to the noblest persons in Paris; this gentleman made Mr. Sterne free of his table and his entertainments while in Paris. His guest wrote home how he had been *fêted* by a M. Popignière,—but the real name of the "Farmer" was Popelinière.* No doubt he went about in his loose, pleasant, Shandean way, talking to M. Diderot and other French friends, of the "M. Popignière" he was going to dine with on that evening—perhaps to their amusement. At this time, and even to the end, Mr. Sterne was blundering terribly in his French.

In this new whirl, he did not forget those he had left behind. He found time to send to his bankers, day after day, for letters from his wife, and was greatly distressed at their irregular arrival. He found time also to write long, affectionate and gossiping letters, in his most graphic, dramatic style,—which were to amuse the lonely tenants of Coxwould. He described for them the great fire that had broken out during the fair of St. Germain, which had consumed all the wooden booths in a few hours, with all their contents, and how "hundreds of unhappy

* He turns up in the "*Mémoires de Luynes*," as entertaining the king at his chateau at Passy.

people are now going crying along the streets, ruined totally." He gives a little sketch of the fair, which was "built upon a spot of ground covered and tiled and as large as the Minster yard, divided into shops, and formed into little streets like a town in miniature." The poor tradesmen had to fly through the streets from these wooden structures, in their shirts. "O! ces moments de malheur—sont terribles," said the barber who came to shave Mr. Sterne the next morning; (he would have written this impassionate speech more correctly) "and the good-natured fellow uttered it with so moving an accent, that I could have found it in my heart to have cried over the perishable and uncertain tenure of every good in this life." It makes a regular picture in this first Sentimental Journey. It is also a fair refutation of such as would insist on Mr. Sterne's making mere capital and "cheap dribble," out of his sympathies and tears. For those to whom this little photograph was sent, were his wife and daughter, who had been long behind the scenes, and on whom it would be scarcely worth the trouble to impose.

He sends them another little *croquis* hastily done —but quite a picture in itself. He has been "these three mornings to hear one Père Clément, the famous preacher, who delights me much . . . . Most excellent, indeed; his matter sound, and to the purpose—his manner more than theatrical, and suggests both in his action and delivery, Madame Clairon, who, you must know, is the Garrick of

the stage here. He has infinite variety, and he keeps up the attention by it wonderfully—his pulpit oblong, with three seats in it, into which he occasionally casts himself—goes a little way, then rises by a gradation of four steps, each of which he profits by as his discourse leads him. In short, 'tis a stage, and the variety of his tones would make you imagine there was no less than five or six actors on it together." Mr. Sterne, no doubt, was wishing for such a stage down at Coxwould pulpit, and the "dramatic discourses of Mr. Yorick" would have exactly suited this scene.

The true Paris cold had set in fiercely, and he talks cozily of his French wood-fires. "I shall never burn coals, I fear, again." He pleasantly anticipates that when they get back again to Coxwould, they will always have, at least, a mixture both of wood and coal. He tells them of his progress in French, and that he speaks it "fast and fluent, but incorrect both in accent and phrase:" (there is something in this unartificial confession very pleasing, and even significant, when we come to estimate his character,) "but the French say, I am most surprising for the time," a compliment very often paid by that polite people to encourage English students of their tongue.

CHAPTER THE..NINETEENTH.

A DINNER PARTY.

STILL, though marvellously recovered and with a colour in his cheeks now, though he "came with no more than is in a dish-clout," he was beginning to think seriously of the South of France. It had been better such a journey had been thought of some months before; and had the winter just gone by been spent at Toulouse or Montpellier, instead of at Paris, he might indeed have been "fortified in my inner man, beyond all danger of relapsing." A good many English, including Mr. Fox and Mr. Macartney, had already left, and he had now been almost wholly drawn into French circles. He was stimulating Diderot's Anglomanie; and, writing home for "all the works of Pope, the neatest and cheapest edition (therefore, I suppose, *not Warburton's*), the dramatic works of Cibber and Cibber's Life, Chaucer, Tillotson's Sermons, the small edition, and all Locke's Works."* This was the commission he gave his publisher Becket, for the great Encyclopædist's English studies. An odd selection; the obsolete dialect of Chaucer seeming

* Unpublished letter in the British Museum.

rather too strong meat for a French student of English. But it was fashionable to have English books—on the shelves at least; and sets of "The Shandys," meant for presents, but only a little less unintelligible than Chaucer—came over "packed up in a box and directed to "Madame Morel, at Calais," and shipped in the "cartel ship." He had grown very intimate, too, with the younger Crebillon—the free-and-easy author of the "Sofa" and "Les Egaremens," whom a romantic English girl was by-and-by to come over and marry, incited by the perusal of those questionable romances. So intimate indeed was Mr. Sterne and the French Sentimentalist, that the result was the extraordinary and truly Shandean contract which, if it had been carried out, would have been one of the oddest literary curiosities conceivable. He was to write "an expostulatory letter" to his English friend "upon the indecorums of T. Shandy," to which Sterne was to *riposter* "by recrimination upon the liberties in his own works—these are to be printed together, Crebillon against Sterne—Sterne against Crebillon, the copy to be sold, and the money equally divided. This is good Swiss policy." This convention was, however, never carried out. Perhaps the Frenchman was lazy, as Mr. Sterne, indeed, anticipated he might be. Still we may discover in this "convention" a figure of the true relation of Mr. Sterne towards his contemporaries and his 'contemporaries' writing—who might also "be answered by recrimination upon the liberties in their own works." More to be regretted

is his new companionship with such men. Fresh from Hall Stevenson, and the free men of London and Crazy Castle, he was flung into the worst circle of Frenchmen—such as Crebillon and his friends. It is but too plain that he had left his bands and cassock behind him at Coxwould, and had voluntarily abnegated any such reverence as social courtesy might pay to his clerical character. But at the same time, it must be borne in mind that there was but one society and one circle in Paris; and into this all entered. Here was to be found Garrick, who wrote home boastfully to his friends, "we had a fine laugh at Baron d'Holbach's, where you dined once, about the wicked company I keep. I am always with that set." There has never been any question about Garrick's propriety; and harder measure should not be dealt out to Sterne than to him. But though this bit of "persiflage," as he called it, was never written, he thought of Crebillon five or six years afterwards, and put his novel, "Les Egaremens," in the hands of Madame R——'s maid, whom he stopped to ask the way to the Hôtel de Modène. He must have found the book, too, long before, in the Skelton library—for a good deal of the Shandean sentiment is precisely of the same quality.

Among the French in Paris he gave full reins to his natural spirits: and to them his peculiar temper seems to have been very acceptable. That curious mixture of sentiment and humour which is eminently French, was his characteristic also. "I laugh till I

also cry," he wrote, "and in the same tender moments cry till I laugh; I Shandy it more than ever." This Shandying was clearly a sort of burlesque speech —a kind of grotesque exaggeration, and leaning to what is called "galimathias,"—also very French.

In various portions of his writings he has dropped a hint or two in reference to success in society, which, coming from one who had himself succeeded, are very precious. "We get forward in the world," he tells us in his "Sentimental Journey," "not so much by doing services as receiving them;" a first principle which is yet only a basis. For "I had got master of my secret just in time to turn these honours to some account, otherwise, as is commonly the case, I should have dined or supped a single time or two round, and then by translating French looks and attitudes into plain English, I should probably have seen that I had got the *couvert* of some more diverting guests, and in course should have resigned all my places one after another, *merely upon the principle that I could not keep them.*". An admirable truth, illustrated every day in the hasty patronage of indifferent ability; which is then as hastily "dropped," simply because there is not sufficient worth in the client to hold his ground. This seems to have made an impression on Mr. Sterne, for he illustrates it again oddly enough in a sermon. "Conversation," he preached, "is a traffick; and if you enter into it without some stock of knowledge to balance the account perpetually betwixt you, the trade drops at once; and this is the reason; . . . owing to the

suspicion that there is nothing to be extracted from the conversation of young itinerants worth the trouble of his bad language, or the interruption of his visit."

It is plain his social gifts were very great: and no one could tell a story with more spirit and effect. A specimen of this "Shandying" has come down, and we are privileged to stand behind his chair at the dinner Lord Tavistock gave on the 4th of June* to the few English then left in Paris, in honour of the King's birthday. A kind of diplomatic factotum named Dutens, who had just come from Turin with Mr. Needham, was of the party, and found himself seated between Lord Berkeley and a tall thin odd-looking man, who he presently found out to be "*le fameux* Sterne"—the English Rabelais. There was a good deal of toasting and drinking "*à l'Anglaise.*" The conversation naturally turned on Turin, where a good many of the party were going; when Mr. Sterne asked his neighbour if he happened to know a M. Dutens when he was at that Court. The Frenchman, with a Frenchman's readiness, answered that he knew the gentleman very intimately indeed; at which reply the whole company began to laugh. Mr. Sterne, with less quickness than might be expected, imputed this hilarity to the recollection of some ridiculous foibles of the absent diplomat, and fancied he saw a good opening for a little "Shandy-

* This must have been the dinner alluded to by Walpole, at which some eighty English sat down.

ing." "I believe he is rather odd," said Mr. Sterne. "Quite an original," said the other. Stimulated by fresh laughter, Mr. Sterne began to sketch in pleasantly an imaginary Dutens, and told some comic stories, with good effect, which M. Dutens, then present, gravely corroborated. The latter went away by-and-by, when the company told Mr. Sterne of his mistake, and warned him that the caricatured diplomatist was only restrained by the courtesies of society from at once resenting the insult, and would most likely take prompt measures in the morning. Next day he was waited on by the English Rabelais, who came to excuse himself for his little *bêtise*, and made many apologies; to be only at once reassured by the Frenchman, who told him that "if he only knew the man as well as *he* did, he would have said something a good deal more unflattering." Mr. Sterne was much pleased with this Shandean answer, embraced the other, and went his way.

It is M. Dutens himself who tells the story, and tells it pleasantly. It *is* a good story; such as might be told of Sheridan or Theodore Hook, and laughed at heartily. There is no need to seek in it the certain marks and tokens of deep moral degradation. It was a good joke. There had been, besides, a good deal of wine drunk "*à l'Anglaise*," at a time when it was the fashion to celebrate various anniversaries with deep draughts. Mr. Sterne's sketches could not have been very personal or offensive, else the Frenchman would have readily stopped his

further progress; for in France it is ridicule that kills. Finally, Mr. Sterne would readily have known that his gown was sufficient protection against a cartel; and therefore his voluntary apology in the morning, for his unconscious discourtesy, was, if anything, rather creditable to him. It is the hard fate of Sterne that some such little commentary as this must attend on nearly every incident of his life: for nearly every incident of his life has been curiously distorted and misrepresented.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

MRS. STERNE TRAVELS.

He was now looking forward eagerly to a meeting with his wife and his daughter Lydia. That "sad asthma," which perhaps he felt his daughter "Lyd" had inherited from him, made change of air indispensable, and in the month of June they were getting ready for the journey. A favourite stock charge against him has been this trading in printed sentimentality, with an utter deficiency in the genuine affections and practical domestic sympathy. But no one who glances over the shower of letters in which this petted child of French society thinks, and plans, and plots, and repeats his injunctions over and over again—anxiously racks his brain for fresh injunctions, all to help this wife and child safely on their road—can ever venture with decency to repeat the charge. This remarkable series of letters does not merely negatively vindicate him from unkindness, but establishes him as the most affectionate of husbands and fathers. Indeed, his love for his "Lydia"—in this so curiously resembling that of Wilkes for *his* "Polly"—should redeem many sins and imperfections. It is even a significant token of

his feeling, that he was not content to wait for their arrival to present Mrs. Sterne with a couple of snuff-boxes (one set in garnets, the other decorated with his portrait), but must send them off at once by a friend.

Paris even then was scarcely a cheap capital; and his long winter campaigning had begun to tell a little on his finances. He had most likely received advances on the sale of the new Shandys, and he was now writing home, pressing his publisher, Becket, to take the copyright off his hands. His letter is admirably business-like and comprehensive, taking in every point likely to be raised in the discussion of the arrangement. He is willing to "make a handsome allowance for all charges, and the drawbacks on your side." He then rather timorously hazards a supposition that "there are 3000 (copies) disposed of," and hopes the remainder will be sold off by the beginning of next year. (The copies were in truth going off a little slowly, but there was no very marked falling off in the sale.) Any little balances were to be paid over to Mrs. Sterne when she was passing through London, who would give her receipt for the money. She was, in short, to negotiate the matter—"the sale of the Shandys—and then the copyright," he wrote to her, "Mark to keep these things distinct in your head. But Becket I have ever found to be a man of probity."

There was other business which was to be directed also by Mrs. Sterne. A certain common near Stil-

lington or Sutton, and bearing the odd name of Rascal, was about being inclosed; and there was besides a little transaction that looks very much as though money was being raised upon this little property. At least a bureau had to be broken open to get at certain "deeds" of Mr. Sterne. Later, a power of attorney came over to Paris for Mr. Sterne's signature. She was also to look out for some one to do Mr. Sterne's official "visitations" at Pocklington.

He seems to have exhausted himself devising means to make their expedition comfortable, and provide against the annoyances of what was then a serious journey. He bought them a chaise from a friend of his, a Mr. Thornhill, who let him have it almost for a song — another proof of his curious fascination — for chaises were at this time at a premium, being all wanted for the army. A gentleman, Mr. R——, who was going to travel in Italy, saw it, and offered him thirty guineas over what he had paid. He sent it down to Calais, where it was to wait for them. He then got Mr. Colebrook, the "Minister of Swisserland's" Secretary, to write to the governor of the Calais Customs in their favour. He found out "a good-natured kind of a trader," a horse-dealer, who was always on the road between London and Paris, and "who was infinitely friendly," in the same office to another lady, "and nursed her on ship-board, and defended her by land with great good-will," and secured his useful aid. He sent away letters,

one, as it were, on the heels of the other, to supply little hints that he had forgotten. The heat was then raging. In Paris "'twas as hot as Nebuchadnezzar's oven," and he was nervously anxious about the travellers. He earnestly warns them about "heating their blood" in travelling, and enjoins them to "come *tout doucement.*" And again he cautions them, "for God's sake rise early, and gallop always in the cool." So hot was it then that the "gentleman of Fortune," who was about Mr. Sterne's chaise, had to be on his road at four in the morning, and dare not travel after nine. He wrote letters to those friends who had been kind to them in London. He sent them their passport. He thought even of little matters of toilette scarcely within his province. "Lydia must have two slight *negligées;* as for painted linens, buy them in town, as they will be more admired because English, than French." He consulted a lady friend on the nice point of the proper place for buying silks; found out that they were "very beautiful and cheap here, as blonds, gauzes, &c.;" and wisely checked an imprudent overloading of their mails with things which could be procured as readily at the end of their journey. Sixty guineas he reckoned they must lay out in Paris on this important department. "For in this country," he wrote truly, and at the present time it is part of the false homage which the goddess of Paris exacts from her children, "nothing must be spared for the back; and if you dine on an onion, and lay in a

garret seven stories high, you must not betray it in your clothes, according to which you are well or ill looked on."

He thought of their providing themselves with some useful workbox articles, "for they have bad pins and vile needles here, so bring for yourself and some for presents." Tea was fair enough up to Dover, but they should take a little to serve from Calais to Paris. Mrs. Sterne was addicted to the minor vice of snuff-taking, and fond of Scotch snuff. He advised her to bring a little mill to grind it, or even she could get her valet to do so, "'twill keep him out of mischief." She was to bring also "a strong bottle screw," for whatever "scrub we may hire," as butler, coachman, &c., *to uncork us our Frontiniac.* (With what an artistic touch he touches this dry, unpoetic article into a little warm home picture; as it were to take off the ungraciousness of so many commissions!) Also "your silver coffee-pot, 'twill serve both to give water, lemonade and orjeat, to say nothing of coffee and chocolate, which, by-the-by, is both cheap and good at Toulouse, like other things." Again, as copper tea-kettles are not to be had in France, "bring a good strong one which will hold two quarts, a dish of tea will be a comfort to us in our journey south. I have a bronze teapot which we will carry also, as china cannot be brought over from England. We must make up a villainous parti-coloured equipage to regale ourselves and our English friends with, at Toulouse."

Another pleasant domestic picture, the motive of which is plainly to draw off Mrs. Sterne's mind from the thought of her journey and its discomforts. He tells them they will be in raptures with their new carriage. They are to give him a seat. "You will wonder all the way how I am to find room in it—'tis by what the coachmakers here call a cave, which is a second bottom added to that you set your feet on, which lets the person who sits over against you down, with his knees to your ankles. . . . . Lyd and I will enjoy this by turns; sometimes I shall take a bidet (a little post-horse) and scamper on before; at other times I shall sit in fresco upon the arm-chair without doors, and one way or other will do very well." A charming little picture, done with a genial good-natured touch, that could only be guided by a warm and affectionate heart. Again, "I wish when you come here, in case the weather is too hot to travel, *you could think it pleasant* to go the Spaw for four or six weeks, where we should live for half the money we should spend at Paris. After that we should take the sweetest season of the vintage, and go to the south of France; but *we will put our heads together, and you shall do just as you please in this and in everything which depends on me*, for I am a being perfectly contented when others are pleased; to bear and forbear will ever be my maxim, only I fear the heat through a journey of five hundred miles for you and my Lydia more than for myself."

It was the 18th or 20th of June before they were

ready to set out. His letters still came showering in on them. He snatched at the very last moment, in the hope of catching them "just as you are on the wing." He wishes to give courage and encouragement.

"You have done everything well," he tells his wife, "with regard to our Sutton and Stillington affairs, and left things in the best channel." As soon as all this London business is off his mind, "everything else will be a step of pleasure, and by the time you have got half-a-dozen stages, you will set up your pipes, and sing Te Deum together *as you whisk it along.*"

He has a gold watch ready for "my Lydia." "Write, and tell me something of everything. I long to see you both, my dear wife and child."

He then huddles a few more hasty little cautions together. No wonder he should say, "I have almost drain'd my brains dry upon the subject." They were to take care and look to their luggage on the Dover road. They were to buy a good strong chain, and have their trunks fastened on in front, "for fear of a dog's trick." They were to take three days on the French roads, for fear of heating themselves; and drink small Rhenish, to keep them cool ("that is, if you like it"). They would find a letter for them at Calais, at the Lyon d'Argent,* to cheer them up on coming out of the packet. He bids them give his love to his friend Fothergill (of the Cathedral), and "to those true

* Grandsires'.

friends which envy has spared me. For the rest, *laisser passer.*" He bids them live well, and deny themselves nothing on the road. He prays "God in Heaven prosper and go along with you." He bids her "kiss my Lydia," for him. Then, finally, encourages them in this sensible stirring fashion: "Now, my dears, once more pluck up your spirits; trust in God, in me, and in yourselves. Write instantly, and tell me you triumph over all fears. Tell me Lydia is better, and a helpmate to you. You say she grows like me. Let her show me that she does so in her contempt of small dangers, and fighting against the apprehensions of them, which is better still. . . . . Dear Bess, I have a thousand wishes, but have a hope for every one of them. You shall sing the *jubilate*. So God bless you, adieu. Believe me your affectionate,

"L. STERNE."

Then, in a postscript, he thoughtfully epitomises all his directions.

"*Memorandum*:—Bring watch-chains, tea-kettles, knives, cookery-book, &c.

"You will smile at this last article. So adieu.

"At Dover, the Cross Keys; at Calais, at the Lyon d'Argent."

And so they set out. Never were travellers more diligently instructed. Would any expert in what may be termed the handwriting of the human heart, with these letters before him, hesitate to attribute them to an affectionate husband, and to an affectionate father; or to a mind that did not limit itself

to profitless sentimental fancies, but travelled further in considerate and practical directions?

It was quite necessary that for all considerations he should have a formal extension of his leave; and he therefore addressed to his Archbishop one of those admirable letters so very different from the tone of the ordinary ones he was in the habit of writing to his own merry familiars. No one could so happily assume an air of mixed gravity, respect,—with, at the same time, a hint of disguised Shandeism,—when he came to address a superior.*

"Paris, May 10th, 1762.

"My Lord,

"Mr. Kilner, my curate at Coxwould, who is a candidate for Priest's Orders at the ensuing Ordination, will deliver this into your Grace's hands. He has served the cure seven months, during which time I have been out of the kingdom, so have so little personal knowledge of him, that I can only certify to his character from the accounts I have had from others: he came extreamly well recommended as a scholar, and a moral man, to me, from the clergyman he last assisted; and by all I have heard from time to time of his behaviour in the discharge of his duty in the parish of Coxwould since, he has given neither the parishioners or myself cause to complain. This is all I can

* This letter to Archbishop Hay Drummond, hitherto unpublished, with others to be given further on in this work, I owe to Mr. Hoggard, of York.

take upon me to certify to y^r^ Grace in his behalf; but he will have the honour to produce certificates from the neighbouring clergy, which I hope will give your Grace all possible satisfaction.

"When I arrived here, the Faculty thought I could not live a month. I have lived, however, my Lord, 5 months, and in a gradual restoration of my health, so that I was setting my face towards home, when I was detain'd unhappily by the ill health of my daughter, who, at 14, is fallen into a confirmed asthma; for which she is advised to winter at Toulouse or Nice, as the only chance to save her. Whilst I was soliciting passports for her and my wife, I was unhappily myself attack'd with a fever, which has ended the worst way it could for me, in a *defluxion poitrine*, as the French physicians call it. It is generally fatal to weak lungs, so that I have lost in ten days all I have gain'd since I came here; and, from a relaxation of my lungs, have lost my voice entirely, that 'twill be much if I ever quite recover it. This evil sends me directly to Toulouse, for w^ch^ I set out from this place the moment my family arrives. The D. of Choiseul has treated me with great indulgence as to my stay in France, and has this moment sent me passports for my family to join me. I beg y^r^ Grace's pardon for the liberty in representing my situation and that of my family. Y^r^ Grace's humanity, I am sure, will take part in my distresses, and that prompts me to lay them open. I wish y^r^ Grace and y^r^

family all health and all happiness in this world and a better.

"I am, my Lord,
"Yr dutiful and ever obliged servant,
"LAURENCE STERNE."

While the Yorkshire travellers were on their road, the faithful guide who had been so anxiously forecasting all their wants, met with an accident, which went nigh to depriving him of the pleasure he was so fondly anticipating. One night during the first days of July, just after he had gone to bed, one of those unlucky vessels in his lungs gave way, —exactly what had befallen him when an undergraduate at Cambridge years before. Before morning he had nearly "bled the bed full." A surgeon was sent for, whom he got to bleed him in both arms. "This saved me," said Mr. Sterne, who had faith in the strange Sangrado doctrines of the time. He had, however, a narrow escape—had to lie on his back for some time without venturing to whisper,—but was out in a week. He was very feeble after his attack, and his face must have gone back to the old "dishclout" hue. He was now indeed paying forfeit, just as he had done for his London campaign.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

THE FIRST "SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY."

At last, on Thursday, the — of July, the travellers reached Paris. They had a rapid and delightful journey, and were delighted with travelling. None of the anticipated troubles had presented themselves. Mr. Sterne had secured apartments for them, and was rejoiced to have them with him. He at once sat down to write a grateful letter of thanks to the business-friend who had been kind to them in London; and with Mrs. Sterne's assistance chose an Indian taffety, which he sent off the very next morning, as a little present for the business-friend's wife. Mrs. Stanhope, "the Consul-General of Algiers'" wife, took charge of the parcel. Such little acts as these, though not very much to be insisted on, show a thoughtfulness, and a sense of the practical kindnesses of life, very inconsistent with our notion of a careless sentimental man.

The young girl, as may be conceived, was in raptures with the wonderful city of Paris. She could not be torn from the window all day long. But to her father's delight, she chafed sorely

against the necessary torment of being "frizzled." But this operation was *de rigueur;* and there was a *grand armée* of *Friseurs* in Paris. It was the fashionable faith. Her little petulance amused him, and he hoped she would always continue the same "child of nature." She must have been then a *piquante*, bright-looking girl; but she did not continue to be that child of nature.

They did not remain very long in Paris; scarcely a fortnight. It was time to be moving southwards. That late accident was serious; and the hurrying about which he mentions, possibly sight-seeing, could scarcely suit a newly-repaired bloodvessel. He had even the stimulant of figuring before the police, the hero of a truly Shandean adventure.

He was going out some seven miles beyond Paris, and hired a little carriage, which he was to drive himself. With characteristic carelessness, he never looked to the quality of the animal that was to take him so far, until he was fairly on the road, when he discovered that it might have been a yoke-fellow for the sorry hack that Yorick used to ride. He had not gone half his journey, when the poor beast dropped down dead in the shafts. It was an embarrassing situation, and there is certainly a ludicrousness in the picture of Yorick holding the reins of the animal. No doubt d'Holbach and the merry men of his set laughed loudly over the story. But they must have been more amused when the "*Chevalier Shandy*" was taken before the police. He began his defence in French, and pleaded for

himself and for the poor over-driven brute who had been worked the whole day previous, without a morsel of corn or hay, "by a worse beast than himself, namely, his master." But that French which he fancied he could "splutter" so famously, failed on this public occasion. In his odd way, he said he "might as well have whistled"—he then —always Shandean—fell back on his Latin, and finally, by dint of a shower of words, and those jerks and gestures of his, forced his judge to do him justice, "no common thing, by the way, in France." A sentiment which will be heartily indorsed even by travellers of a hundred years later. I think it not unlikely that this absurd adventure may have borne fruit in another direction; and that the poor over-driven brute sinking down to die on the public high road outside Paris, may have furnished a hint for the exquisitely pathetic picture of "the dead ass."

About the 24th or 25th of July, in the midst of the furious French heats, the like of which "the oldest Frenchman" could not call to mind, the Sterne family started on their journey. So distressing was the sun, that it took them three weeks to reach Toulouse. They suffered so acutely, being "toasted, roasted, grill'd, stew'd, and carbonated on one side or other all the way," that he could not bear to talk of it afterwards.

It was an expensive journey,—too much so for their not very abundant finances. The posting regulations were the most arbitrary and costly that could

be conceived. They were based on true Bourbon principles of political economy, and reflected the *Grand Monarque.* A party of four travelling in their own carriage, were forced to take six horses and two postilions; if a servant (in addition) was sitting behind, the traveller was not indeed compelled to take an extra horse, but had to pay for one. He had also to pay double fare for the first post out of Paris, double fare on passing Fontainebleau, —homage to the King of France if he should be staying there—and also at Lyons. "Royal Posts," as they were complimentarily termed, met the traveller at various quarters of France. These odious exactions came of the wretched "farming" system; the "*Postes,*" like every branch of revenue, being farmed to the highest bidder, on principles recklessly defiant of true political economy. Altogether it must have been a very expensive journey; for the mere travelling from Paris to Lyons cost Smollett forty louis.

Mr. Sterne began to write his Journey almost as soon as he reached his destination, with French pictures and associations about him, and when the memory of all he had seen was still fresh. The result is some charming sketches, with the bloom and fragrance of the romantic south upon them, full of life and delicacy and colour. These are to be found in the seventh volume of "Tristram;" and the traveller who has been down south, and thinks fondly of Tarrascon, and Beaucaire, and Nismes, and Avignon—those names so full of

music—and the grape districts of Lunel, and the *Côte roti*, has only to turn over a page or two of Mr. Sterne's "Sketch Book," and he will feel the *tone* of the place stealing back on him marvellously. In his letters, too, Mr. Sterne gave little pictures, which show (as has been here so often insisted on) what a literal romance of his life he meant "Tristram" to be.

We can follow them all along the road as they "scamper it away to the banks of the Garonne;" through Fontainebleau, "where any English gentleman of fashion may be accommodated with a nag or two, to partake of the sport, taking sure care not to out-gallop the king." To *Sens*—("you may dispatch it in a word, *'tis an archiepiscopal see*"); through Auxerre, where he took my Uncle Toby and Trim, and Mr. Shandy, into the Abbey of St. Germain, and where the young Benedictine (Mr. Sterne always touches his monks very sweetly and gracefully) pointed them out the tombs of St. Maxima and St. Optat, this latter, the name which Mr. Shandy thought so delightfully appropriate for a bishop;* and through Lyons, where they saw the wonderful mechanism of the great clock of "Lippius of Basil." All the way the terrific heat accom-

* Dr. Ferriar quite missed the point of the allusion, which would indeed escape most readers. Sterne was thinking of the Yorkshire diocese, where the Archbishop had certain rights of nomination known as "Options," and which Sydney Smith dealt with long after in his pleasant "Plymley Letters." This allusion, together with the preceding "hit" at Sens, is evidence that Mr. Sterne did not care to show too much reverence for episcopal authority at home.

panied them; from Paris to Nismes they did not see a cloud "half as broad as a twenty-four sols piece." Even at nights they suffered cruelly, being "eat up at night by bugs and other unswept-out vermin, the legal inhabitants (if length of possession gives right) at every inn we lay at." Still his health was mending with every stage, he "had left death, the Lord knows how far behind me. . . . Still I fled him, but I fled him cheerfully; as he lag'd, every step he lost softened his looks."

At Lyons came their first misfortune, where their bargain of a chaise broke down, almost at the gate; and they had to make an inglorious entry into that stately city in a cart, "higgle-piggledy with the baggage." This disaster was turned to profit, for "a pert vamping chaise undertaker" bought their shattered carriage on the spot; so they were now to take boat and have a charming voyage down the Rhine as far as Avignon, through the Côte Roti and Hermitage, past the old cities of Orange, Vienne, Valence, and Montelimar. Even now the traveller, swept away southward on the back of the screaming Marseilles Express, looks down wistfully from the great railway bridge on the Rhone, winding and glistening below him like molten silver, and thinks of the towns with melodious names that dot its banks.

It was very many posts to Avignon, but the journey by water would cost them but nine livres each. The boat went that afternoon, and to fill in the time he consulted his "Itinerary" ("God knows

what," he says—but we know it was La Force's) for the sights of Lyons. The great clock, however, he was "told by one of the minor canons as I was entering the west door, was all out of joint, and had not gone for some years." The great Chinese History in thirty volumes, at the Jesuits, he could not see; and the "tomb of the Lovers," about which he was very enthusiastic, he found levelled by order of the corporate authorities. He was just sallying out to visit this shrine under the guidance of his valet-de-place, François, "and having called for my bill—as it was uncertain whether I should return to my inn—I paid it; I had, moreover, given the maid ten sous, and was just receiving the *dernier compliments* * of Monsieur le Blanc, for a pleasant voyage down the Rhone, when I was stopped at the gate." Never was a more welcome interruption, for to it we owe the charming picture of the "Poor Ass," who "had just turned in with a couple of large panniers upon his back, to collect eleemosynary turnip-tops," and to whom he gave ten marcaroons. He was stopped, too, by the commissary of the post, who came with a "rescript in his hand for the payment of some six livres odd sous," when that most amusing and truly French dialogue took place between them. It was a charge for the first post out of Lyons,† and was some of

* This is some of Mr. Sterne's bad French; more of the same imperfect sort will be met with in the text further on.

† Mr. Sterne calls it St. Fons, with characteristic inaccuracy. Its real name was St. Saphorin.

the old Farmer-General extortion. "But I don't go by land," said Mr. Sterne: "You may if you please," said the commissary. "'Your most obedient servant,' said I, making him a low bow. The commissary, with all the sincerity of grave good breeding, made me one as low again. I never was more disconcerted with a bow in all my life.'" (How admirable is this!) "'But I travel by water, I am going down the Rhone this very afternoon, my baggage is in the boat, and I have actually paid nine livres for my passage.' '*C'est tout égal*, 'tis all one,' said he. 'Bon dieu, what pay for the way I go? and for the way I do *not* go?' '*C'est tout égal*,' replied the commissary." Then came the droll incident of his lost "remarks,"—a hint of which has taken place, but which is almost too farcical to be true in details; which "remarks" were traced from the pocket of the chaise, where they had been forgotten, to the chaise-vamper's wife, who had her hair in "*papilliotes*" (as he calls them). "O Seigneur," said he, "you have got all my remarks upon your head Madam."

He "just got time enough to the boat" to save his passage; and before he had sailed a hundred yards "the Rhine and Sâon met together, and carried me down merrily betwixt them." He merely passed through Avignion,* saw "an old house in which the Duke of Ormond resided," and recommenced his land travels. The ladies went in a carriage, he followed on a mule, with a servant

* So spelled.

upon a horse, and "the owner of both striding his way before us with a long gun upon his shoulder and a sword under his arm, lest peradventure we should run away with his cattle." At Avignon, too, when dismounting, he called, in a free-and-easy way to a man at the inn door:—"Prithee, friend, take hold my mule for a moment, for I want to pull off one of my jack-boots which hurts my heel;" who calmly did as he was desired, and proved to be a Marquis. Curious to say, just such an adventure befell Mr. Smollett a year or two later on *his* travels. But it is worth comparing the delicate tribute to this piece of genuine politeness insinuated by Sterne, and the gruff, surly, growling acknowledgment of his mistake on the part of the Scotchman.

And from Avignon he began to move slowly through the richer plains of Languedoc, passing by Beaucaire, with its quaint curious fair, which flourishes to this hour, and which the elder Dumas passed by, in *his* pleasant Southern travels over the same ground. We get pleasant glimpses and pictures as we follow Mr. Sterne lounging it along upon his mule. It was near Beaucaire that the hind wheel came off the chaise: it was a sultry day, and about noon, and they were in the midst of a huge plain, some four miles from either tree or shrub. The whole party had to sit in this desert for five hours upon a gravelly road, without a drop of water. The postilions, "too dough-hearted," began to cry bitterly over their misfortune. Nothing could be done. "By Heaven," said Mr. Sterne, stripping

off his coat and waistcoat with wonderful energy, "something *shall* be done, or I'll thrash you both within an inch of your lives." He made them ride off "like devils," to the post for a cart. The travellers had to wait there five hours, under the sun in that sandy spot, until they returned. The roads were swarming with people for the Beaucaire fair. Going or returning, they saw the luckless family sitting at the roadside, with their broken-down chaise, and a mountain of baggage which weighed ten quintals. Every one of the simple peasants stopped a moment to ask them if they were going to the fair. "No wonder," quoth Mr. Sterne, grumbling *sotto voce;* "we have goods enough!"

After all was set right again, he went forward on his mule, the "man with the gun" still in front. Mr. Sterne lounged on in a truly Shandean fashion. He must have allowed his party to get a post or so in front—a delay to be easily fetched up. He loitered behind, and picked up genuine bits of charming life. He saw the dresses, and decorations, and scenery. He spoke to every one—to the drum-maker, who was making drums for his Beaucaire Fair;* to the two Franciscan friars, who were trudging it along, and with whom he turned back for a short way; to the "gossip," from whom he bought

* Another instance of the truth and accuracy of Sterne's notes. For Arthur Young, some years after, also meeting the people coming from this fair, remarked how every one had a child's drum tied to his cloak-bag.

the Provence figs for four sous, but in the interpretation of which contract a legal difficulty arose in reference to a conveyance of the basket also—in short, "joining all parties before me—waiting for every soul behind—hailing all those who were coming through cross roads—arresting all kinds of beggars, pilgrims, fiddlers"—he was always in company; his mule loving society as much as he did, and having always "some proposals on his part to offer to every beast he met." He seems to have found it a delightful pilgrimage. Until he finally glides into that exquisite idyll which begins like a song:—"'Twas on the road betwixt Nismes and Lunel, where there is the best Muscatto wine in all France." The charming village dance, with Nannette, and the pipe of the lame youth, ringing musically in our ears, brings us in softly to the old red-brick town of Toulouse, and to the end of his journey.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

TOULOUSE.

They were now established at Toulouse—that not unpicturesque old city of the Garonne; with its red-brick houses (a spectacle pretty rare in France), its quays, and long streets. In one respect it suggested old York, now so far away; for it had the air and tone of a little capital, and boasted its own provincial gentility and local nobles (possibly a little decayed), who could not compass the more expensive living of the grand metropolis. There was a corporate state kept up—lifted a good deal above common corporate associations; and eight municipals, bearing the quaint names of "Capitouls," administered the affairs of the city with suitable magnificence. The Archbishop was the famous Lomenie de Brienne; and all were grouped round the financial viceroy, the intendant of the province, who gave parties and entertainments.

The society at this time—of which Miss Cornelia Knight has given us just a pleasant glimpse—and the general tone of the place had a stately old-fashioned air, which suited Mr. Sterne excellently.

For there were here Knights of Malta, and emigré Irish families of good blood; no less than three learned academies, and an odd rococo congress, held for competition in poetry, and known as the *Jeux Floreaux*. One of the troublesome, ill-regulated, useless French parliaments met at Toulouse, and by its periodical collisions with that of Paris and royal authority, furnished dramatic elements and conversation to the little society. There was besides a mixture of the two religions, the Calvinists being strong in this quarter of France; but the higher Catholic clergy were, Miss Knight tells us, "very tolerant, very charitable, and very delightful in society." Such would have been welcome company to Mr. Sterne. He had long ago shaken himself free of the narrow prejudices which disfigure the sermons he was obliged to address to his Coxwould flock. Travelling had helped him to that more enlightened toleration which becomes at least the man of the world. He had courage to put down in one of the later Shandys how heartily he detested the polemics of divines. At Paris he had made a friend of a half French, half Irish Priest, the Abbé Mackarty, who took immense pains in furnishing him with hints for his journey—kindness which Mr. Sterne thoughtfully acknowledged by commissioning Mrs. Sterne to bring over a watch-chain for him ("'twill be a present worth a kingdom to him," said he). The Abbé did not allow his kindness to stop there, but knowing something of Toulouse, found out a resi-

dence for them, and planned all their expenses. Mr. Sterne seems to have been very grateful, and wrote to his friends of these little kindnesses.

They were lodged delightfully, just outside the town, in a stately house, elegant, charmingly furnished, built in the form of a hotel, with a court in front, and opening behind on pretty gardens laid out in serpentine walks, and considered the finest in the place. These grounds were so large and so much admired, that all the ladies and gentlemen of that quarter used to come and promenade there on the autumn evenings, and were made welcome. Inside, there were a fine dining-room and a spacious reception-room —quite as good as Baron d'Holbach's at Paris; three handsome bed-rooms with dressing-rooms, and two good rooms below, dedicated to Yorick —where he wrote his adventures. There were cellars in abundance. Mr. Sterne was in raptures with it all—revelled in his seigneurie of such a mansion—thought it only "too good by half for us;" but felt comfort in the wonderfully moderate rent—only thirty pounds a year! For this modest rent, too, his landlord, M. Sligniac, was to "keep up" the gardens. Nay, there was a pretty country-house not far off—an old chateau, with a pavilion attached to it—where Mr. Sterne used also to write his Shandys, and which he christened "Don Pringello's," in compliment to one of the Crazy Castle set—and which M. Sligniac allowed him to use, all included in the same modest

amount! Something of this is to be accounted for the cheapness of the times. Even twenty years back, such charming retreats on the edge of a French provincial town were to be secured by the economic stranger. But something, too, I suspect, must be placed to the account of the tenant's seductive and pleasant ways.

The whole establishment was organized in a few days. Mr. Sterne loved to revel in this new housekeeping. They had an excellent cook, a *femme-de-chambre*, and "a good-looking *laquais*" (François, most likely). He found out that they could live "for very very little." Wood was the only thing dear; and by-and-by they found that, keeping a capital table, two hundred and fifty pounds would be their whole yearly expenditure. He at once put himself on a course of ass's milk three times a day, and began to get strong again.

For the first fortnight or so, he missed his Paris friends, and wrote home a little dismally. Some letters, too, from his Epicurean friend Hall, set him longing to be back again: and made him maunder out regrets and fears, in a lament of worse than his average French. "*Ce sera là*" (at Crazy Castle) *où reposera ma cendre—et se sera là où mon cousin viendra repondre les pleurs dues a notre amitie.*" But he soon began to recover his spirits —talked boastfully "of giving the blue devils a drubbing"—and, as usual, began to make plenty of friends. He was dining with Mr. Hewit a few days after he arrived, and before long knew everybody. It was gay enough. For the Countess Fumel

and M. Bonrepos "received" nearly every night of the week. The old President D'Orbesson kept a hospitable table—"donne toujours à manger," wrote the little scandal-mongers of the place, "et vit toujours avec Mdme. La Garse."

About the end of September "an epidemic vile fever" visited Toulouse, and swept away hundreds. Mr. Sterne, just then getting restored, was seized, and was very nearly "journeying on to the other world." It clung to him for six weeks, during which time he was in the hands of the Toulouse faculty, "the errantest of all the charlatans in Europe, or the most ignorant of all pretending fools." They had all but sent him travelling down the valley of the great Shadow, when it occurred to him to dispense altogether with their aid, and leave his cure to "Dame Nature," who, "dear goddess, has saved me fifty different pinching bouts." This impunity, he told the lord of Crazy Castle, was at last beginning to make him think that he was to "leave you all by translation, and not by fair death." Nothing indeed could damp that wonderful spirit which made up for a miserable constitution, and which made him joyously chant *poculum elevatum* when barely convalescent; "*et cela etant,*" he sings from his pavilion, to Hall Stevenson, in his incorrigible French, "having a bottle of Frontiniac and glass at my right hand, I drink, dear Antony, to thy health and happiness."

By the middle of October he was "stout and foolish again, as a happy man can wish to be," and had actually finished his first Shandy volume.

He had dashed in his travels, as it were, at a white heat, and was painting in Uncle Toby's loves with great delight. He was meditating, too, schemes of "other works;"—no doubt a dusky hint of the Sentimental Journey. There is room indeed to suspect that the seventh volume of Tristram Shandy was this "other work;"—the first portion of a Sentimental Journey commenced, and abandoned for the present. It is likely that he began at once with my Uncle Toby's amours, and, being later pressed for copy, had thrown in his unfinished travels as a make-weight. It will be seen at a glance that these travels belong properly to the "Sentimental Journey," and beyond that violent and improbable introduction of Uncle Toby and Trim into the cathedral at Auxerre—clearly done as a link—have nothing to do with the adventures of Tristram.

For the moment, he had got tired of the provincial town. The place was not to his taste, though about as good as any town in the south of France; but he lays his disgust principally to the account of the "eternal platitude of the French character, little variety, no originality in it at all, for they are very civil; but civility itself is but uniform, wearies and *bodders* one to death." The platitude was scarcely "eternal," but more temporarily born of the conventionalism of the *philosophers;* and Walpole, in his next visit to Paris, was disgusted with the same *fade* dead level social speech, of which their monotonous plains, decorated with a few "trees cut into fire shovels," were but a type. Sterne, too, was

sick of the local parliament and its wrangles. "If I do not mind," he said, "I shall grow most stupid and sententious" by mere contagion. His daughter, however, relished her new life much, and with masters in music, dancing, and French, was rapidly adapting herself to the new country.

Already he was looking forward to leaving as soon as the winter was over. He had said that they should all set out for Barèges or Bagnieres, and after taking the water, of which there can be no question he had a title to partake, he proposed returning home. Mrs. Sterne, however, wished to stay another year, "to save money;" and this "opposition of wishes," said Mr. Sterne, "though it will not be as sour as lemon, yet 'twill not be as sweet as sugar candy." It was certainly premature to discuss the question, and is only fresh evidence of that unhappy incompatibility which can be traced like a frayed thread all through Mr. Sterne's married life. Still he took this opposition good-humouredly. "My dear wife," he said, "is against all schemes of additional expense, which wicked propensity (though not of despotic power,) yet I cannot suffer. But she may talk, I will do my own way, and she will acquiesce without a word of debate upon the subject. Who can say so much in praise of his wife? few, I trow." At the moment this debate was going on there was "bitter cold weather," going on for fourteen days together, which has obliged us to "sit with whole fagots of wood lighted up to our noses." Snow was on the ground, and by the time the winter was over, he was complaining

of agues and the moisture. It does therefore seem a little unreasonable in Mrs. Sterne to seek to detain her delicate husband another winter at such a place, even if he deserved pains and penalties for his own act in bringing them there. And it must be borne in mind that the Pyrenees, where was the spot he wished to go to, was actually in sight.

He had an invaluable banker up at Paris, Mr. Foley, of the firm of Panchaud & Foley, who was to him more as a warm friend than a mere banker. This was but the natural operation of Mr. Sterne's delightful art of attaching strangers. M. Brousse was the correspondent at Toulouse, and by-and-by, in spite of that marvellous cheapness, Mr. Foley was remitting very frequently through M. Brousse. The banker was the intimate of Baron d'Holbach, their common friend. Down at Toulouse also was a Mrs. M—— (who may have been that Mrs. Meadows who turns up later in England), whom Mr. Foley also knew, with whom Mr. Sterne used to dine. The Hewits were still there; M. Tollot, his Paris friend, was not; but Sterne heartily wished he could lead Sir Charles down. Mr. Woodhouse, "an amiable, worthy man," was also there, on his road to Italy. They had altogether a very pleasant, lively, noisy little *coterie*—a sort of "happy society, living together like brothers and sisters." They met every night together, "fiddling, laughing, and singing, and cracking jokes."

Towards Christmas, his friends the Hewits came on a visit to him, and the lively host was presently organizing a pleasant entertainment

suited to the season. "You will scarce believe the news I tell you," he wrote gravely to his friend Foley; "there are a company of English strollers arrived here, who are to act comedies all the Christmas, and are now busy in making dresses and preparing some of our best comedies." He was, in fact, getting up amateur theatricals with Mrs. M——, his daughter, and others of his society, "to whom," he adds in his mysterious French, "I proposed this scheme *soulagement.*" They "did very well." They had "a grand orchestra," and for the first performance Mr. Sterne selected "The Busy Body," and "The Journey to London." Should we not like to see the playbill of those Toulouse theatricals? He spoke of adapting "The Journey to London" to their own adventures, and calling it "The Journey to Toulouse." We can scarcely speculate as to the part he would have chosen for himself in this last play, but in the "Busy Body," Marplot would have fitted him exactly, and he would have played it delightfully.

The winter passed by, and it came to the end of March, when he went on a visit to his friend Hewit, who lived in the country not very far away. From that house he wrote to that "honest soul," Mr. Foley, dating his letter from Toulouse. "Though that's a mistake," he begins oddly, "I mean the date of the place." His letters to this gentleman were now pretty regularly pitched in the one key. He was wanting remittances through "Messrs. Brousse & Sons." He had not "five louis

to vapour with in this land of coxcombs. My wife's compliments." He is visiting "Messrs. Brousse & Sons" every post day this last fortnight. "When a man has no more than a half-dozen guineas in his pocket, and a thousand miles from home, and in a country where he can as soon raise the Devil as a six livres piece to go to market with, you cannot envy my situation. God bless you; remit me the balance." "Poverty of spirit," he wrote again, "is worse than poverty of purse by ten thousand per cent.," and incloses a draft for a hundred and thirty pounds, which he requires to be cashed by return of post, or he will send "you and all your commissions to the D——l. I don't hear that they have tasted one fleshy banquet all this Lent. You will make an excellent *grillè*. As for Panchaud, they can make nothing of him but *Bouillon*."

By April he had already settled on leaving for Bagnières. About the beginning of June he was to "decamp like a patriarch" with his whole family, and stay three months. "For such an expedition money was wanting, and the raising of these supplies brought about a little misunderstanding between him and his banker which is very characteristic. It was all founded on a mistake, but shows how much he had attached this "honest soul" to him. His English agent had promised to forward a bill for eighty pounds, and Mr. Sterne, anxious to be on the road, and not wishing to wait for "advices," &c. (a letter from York took eighteen days to reach Toulouse), hoped his friend would give him credit

for a post or two, and advance the money. This request he made on the 29th of April, and assumed it would be done as a matter of course. He waited nearly a month with everything packed up and ready to start, without any notice being taken of his note. He then sat down and wrote a sore and sarcastic letter, that plainly spoke his annoyance, yet with which it would be hard to be seriously offended. Like all his letters on emergencies, it is just the pattern of a letter that should be written to a friend, but to a friend who has appeared to have been neglectful. "It is some disappointment to me," he says, "that you have taken no notice of my letter, especially as I told you we waited for the money before we set out. . . . . Perhaps my good friend has waited till he heard the money was paid in London; but you might have trusted to my honour that all the cash in your iron box could not have tempted me to say the thing that is not. . . . . it would have been taken kindly if you had wrote me you would transmit me the money when you had received it . . . . ." "After all," he says at the close, "I heartily forgive you, for you have done me a signal service in mortifying me, and I am determined to grow rich upon it. Adieu, and God send you wealth and happiness."

It turned out to be a misunderstanding. The banker was overwhelmed with business, and had forgotten the application. He wrote back, hurt at the tone of his friend's letter, enclosing the

money, and bidding him never scruple to draw on him for any occasion of the kind. Mr. Sterne acknowledged his kindness in a grateful and graceful letter, saying "I was the best friends with you in the world before my letter had got a league." Even in that remote part of the world he had made out friends who could be useful to him in such an emergency; and a "Mr. R.," of Montpellier, whom he had never even seen, had sent him a letter of credit for two hundred pounds, which he had then in his desk. This good-natured "Mr. R." Smollett helps us to identify as a Mr. Ray, the banker, of Montpellier.

Again Mr. Sterne had to write to his Archbishop, setting out a catalogue of his sufferings with a pleasant *bonhomie*, and pleading for an extension of leave, in a style of his own that almost amounts to a fascination. It has been before remarked what an engaging tone he could assume to those who were above him; and these letters are significant proofs of his cordial relation, in spite of secret enemies and open calumny, with his episcopal superior.

"Toulouse, May 7, 1763.

"My Lord:

"Though there is little in this part of the world worth giving you an account of, and of myself, perhaps, the least of anything in it, yet bad as the subject is, it is my duty to say something about it, and your Grace, for that reason, I am sure will bear with the trouble.

"It was this time twelve months that I thought

myself so far recovered, that I was preparing to return home, when the attention to my daughter's health who had had an increase of an asthma under which she had lingered some time, determined my route otherwise; as an original weakness of lungs was her case as well as my own, I thought it just to give the daughter the same chance for her life which had saved her father's. Of this I wrote y^r^ Grace a letter, but had scarce sent it to the post, when (from what cause I know not, except the extreme weakness of the organ) I broke a vessel in my lungs, w^ch^ could not be closed till I had almost bled to death; so that to the motives of going with my daughter into the south of France, I had that superadded—my own immediate preservation; accordingly I have been fixed here with my family these ten months, and by God's blessing it has answered all I wished for, with regard to my daughter; I cannot say so much for myself, having since the first day of my arrival here been in a continual warfare with agues, fevers, and physicians—the 1^st^ brought my blood to so poor a state, that the physicians found it necessary to enrich it with strong bouillons, and strong bouillons and soups a santé threw me into fevers, and fevers brought on loss of blood, and loss of blood agues—so that as *war begets poverty, poverty peace*, &c. &c.—has this miserable constitution made all its revolutions; how many more it may sustain, before its last and great one, God knows—like the rest of my species, I shall fence it off as long as I can. I am advised now to try the virtues of the waters of Banyars, and shall encamp like a patri-

arch w^h my whole household upon the side of the Pyreneans, this summer and winter at Nice; from whence in spring I shall return home, never, I fear, to be of service, at least as a preacher. I have preached too much, my Lord, already; and was my age to be computed either by the number of sermons I have preached, or the infirmities they have brought upon me, I might be truly said to have the claim of a *Miles emeritus*, and was there a Hotel des Invalides for the reception of such established upon any salutary plain betwixt here and Arabia Felix, I w^d beg your Grace's interest to help me into it—as it is, I rest fully assured in my heart of y^r Grace's indulgence to me in my endeavours to add a few quiet years to this fragment of my life —and with my wishes for a long and a happy one to y^r Grace, I am, from the truest veneration of y^r character,

"Your most dutiful servant,

"L. STERNE."

By the middle of June they were all at Bagnières. We have not a single line to record their doings at that watering-place. He expected "much health and much amusement from the concourse of adventurers from all corners of the earth." But it did not come up to his expectations, for the following year he spoke contemptuously of its pleasures as compared with those of Scarborough. He had laid out a little expedition from thence over the Pyrenees, and possibly a week in Spain, with a view to materials for his Shandean travels.

We know not whether he ever carried out this scheme. We can only regret the loss, for he has been so successful with his French brush: how he would have revelled in the Spanish tints! We have lost chapters that would have been as bright and true in tone as Gil Blas.*

Later, they went down to Marseilles, and also paid a visit to Aix, neither of which places they liked much. Aix was a "Parliament town," and Toulouse had given him a surfeit of such. And to all these places he took with him Mrs. Sterne and his Lydia. It was now October, and getting on fast to another winter. His chest admonished him it was time to look out for a sheltered retreat; and there can be no question but that he was yearning for England, and would have gladly gone home in the summer. It is not too much to assume, that he had to yield to domestic considerations, either of economy or affection; and that Mrs. Sterne, by those silent tactics which he described so pleasantly, had her way. They were determined not to return to Toulouse, and by the 5th of October they were all established at the famous sanatory city of Montpellier.

* Mr. Waterton, that admirable practical naturalist, has told me that the whole scene of the Dead Ass is thoroughly Spanish in tone, sentiment, and colour. It may have been transferred from the other side of the Pyrenees to Nampont.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

MONTPELLIER.

MONTPELLIER was at this season in high repute for delicate persons, and invalids of all countries fled thither from their own hard winters. It was considered a handsome town, "a magazine of houses;" which were more showy inside than out. Socially it was very gay, it having Courts of Justice, "*cours souverains*," an Intendency, and, above all, the Assembly of the Estates of Languedoc, who met there with all due state. It was, besides, the seat of a military government, and was full of "*gens de condition*." It was, moreover, famous in France for the special attraction of its women. These were to be seen every day on the *Canourgue*—the fashionable promenade—with handkerchiefs tied carelessly about their heads. For there reigned here the most delightful absence of all restraint. They were noted for their pleasant easy manners; their good humour and wit; and the easy welcome they gave to strangers. It was remarked that even those who were ugly had a certain attraction which it was hard to resist.* A dangerous locality, certainly, for Mr. Sterne's inflammable heart. Strangers

* See Madame Du Noyer's lively "Lettres Galantes," tom. i. p. 114

were very welcome, and English abounded. There were many parties, and much fashionable high play always going forward. No wonder that when an agreeable Frenchwoman was waiting on "Monsieur," on the eve of setting out for this pleasant spot, that august person should congratulate her on going to the "prettiest country in the world," and own that he often thought with delight on the time he had spent there some thirty years before.

Strange to say, Mr. Sterne did not seem to like it. He was pining for home; and actually in the first week after his arrival was laying out departing in February for England, "where my heart has been fled these six months,"—then stay a fortnight in Paris—pass on to Brussels—Rotterdam, "for the sake of seeing Holland" (*materiel* for a book of Travels), and "embark from thence to London." This was five or six months before he could hope to depart, and with exactly such castle-building had he entertained himself during his first visit at Toulouse. At this time too, he was tempted by an offer of going to Italy, in the quality of what he has called "Bear Leader," but he did not like either the terms that were proposed, or the bear he was to lead.

His Toulouse friend, Mr. Hewit, was also staying at Montpellier. But a very agreeable variety was produced by the arrival of some Paris friends, and that M. Tollot, who he had hoped "would bring Sir Charles" to Toulouse. This gentleman, who seems to have always had a genuine kindness for him, was

delighted to meet again "*le bon et agréable* Tristram," as he called him, and stayed nearly a fortnight. They talked together over future plans, and M. Tollot drew a pleasant picture of future amusements together—how they were to find Mr. Sterne a room at their Hotel in Paris—how there was to be a cover regularly laid for him each day—how they were to be joined by Hall Stevenson, and travel home to England together. Mr. Sterne entered into the scheme warmly, and, as will be seen, when passing through Paris, went and staid with them as proposed.

Monsieur Tollot also talked a good deal with the Hewits, and they told him some particulars about Mr. Sterne's Toulouse life. "*Le bon et agréable* Tristram," with all his lively gifts, was naturally made welcome everywhere; but poor Mrs. Sterne, perhaps not so *recherché*, would pursue him everywhere. She clung to him tenaciously—"*Elle voulait être de tout*," says the Frenchman who tells the story. Nothing affords such wicked delight to French society as a nuptial exhibition of this sort—it gives occasion to all manner of smart sayings. But Mr. Sterne accepted his wife's pursuit, which is reported to have made him pass "*d'assez mauvais momens*," with "the patience of an angel."* This letter is not of much moment, nor indeed of much dignity in a historical sense; yet still it has some little value, for without disparaging Mrs. Sterne, who, after all, meant well, it shows him as a good-humoured as well as a sensible husband.

* Mr. Cooper's "Seven Letters of Sterne."

That winter nearly passed by. He got over the Christmas in tolerable health, and on the fifth of January, was writing a kind warm letter to his friend Mr. Foley, chiding him for not writing "even a single line, be it only to tell me how your watch goes," which he left unfinished on his desk and then went out for a ride towards Pezenas. Yorick was always destined to be unlucky in his horses. Coming home, his beast broke down and refused to stir. "He was as immovable as Don Quixote's wooden horse, and my arm was dislocated whipping him. 'This,' quoth I, 'is inhuman.' 'No,' says a peasant on foot behind me, 'I'll drive him home.' So he laid on his posteriors, but 'twas needless; as his face was turned towards Montpellier he began to trot." The result was that Mr. Sterne returned home in an aguish fever, which kept him ten days in his bed, and the unfinished letter was not despatched until the fifteenth. . . He was low-spirited after this, and seems to have suffered terribly in what he forcibly calls "this scuffle with Death." He adds that "unless the spirit of prophecy deceive me, I shall not die, but live," and then breaks into a very remarkable declaration,—"In the meantime, dear Foley, let us live as merrily but as innocently as we can. *It has ever been as good, if not better, than a Bishopric to me—and I desire no other.*" This manful speech was addressed to one who lived in the heart of the wild Paris set—with Diderot and the rest, and who must have learnt, if not from personal knowledge, at least from good authority, of all Mr. Sterne's excesses—if such there were. Sterne was, at least,

too shrewd a man of the world to volunteer such a piece of advice in such a quarter, unless he knew he was saying what was true.

By-and-by more English arrived. Lord Rochford, passing through on his way to Italy, made him a call, and told him how Mr. Fox—"my worthy friend," Mr. Sterne calls him—was then in Paris, and how the gay metropolis was almost full of English. His health was mending slowly, and his physicians, after treating him ineffectually, suddenly informed him, almost to his amusement, "If you stay any longer here, sir, it will be fatal to you." "And why, good people," answered the patient, naturally enough, "were you not kind enough to tell me this sooner?"

This treatment was indeed barbarous, and reads like a bit of Molière. Anything more ludicrously inefficient for a consumptive patient cannot be conceived. They almost poisoned him with a succession of what they called *bouillons refraichissants*, the elements of which were "a cock *flayed* alive, and boiled with poppy seeds, these pounded in a mortar, afterwards passed through a sieve." There was besides to be present one crawfish, which should be a male one. This was *de rigueur*, a female crawfish being likely to be fatal! This precious composition must have been devised specially for the English, and for that malady of "*consomption*" which we are told was peculiar to them. There can be no question but that the physician who prescribed this primitive nostrum for Mr. Sterne, was the same M. F—— whom Smollett consulted when he visited Montpellier the

following year. It is the most amusing passage in his travels. There was an English physician resident there, Dr. Fitzmaurice; but M. F——, "that great Lanthorn of medicine," was at the head of the local faculty. Smollett sent him his fee of a louis, by a servant, with his "case" drawn up in true medicinal Latin; and on the morning after, received back a sheet of remarks in French, the ignorance displayed in which showed him clearly that his "case" had not been read, or that its language was not among the acquirements of the Montpellier physicians. But with the remarks came a prescription, the favourite *bouillons rafraichissants*, precisely the same as Mr. Sterne's, containing the "*petit poulet*," *le chair, le sang, le cœur, et le foie* "*d'une tortue*," and the garden seeds. On receipt of which, the patient sent him twelve livres, and a characteristic note, "*Ce n'est pas sans raison que M. F—— jouit d'un si grand réputation. Je n'ai plus de doutes, graces à Dieu et à M. F——.*" The doctor's reply was no less happy. "*Monsieur n'a plus de doutes. J'en suis charmé! Reçu 12 livres.*" He was indeed an arrant charlatan, and Mrs. Sterne, comparing notes with the Scotch physician at Toulouse, told him of an unhappy English youth named Oswald, son to a merchant, who had fallen a victim to their caprices. The young man, in the last stage of consumption, took his *bouillons rafraichissants* for above a month, with the worst results; and on his complaining, was told precisely as Mr. Sterne had been told: "Sir, the air of this place is too sharp for your lungs." "Then," said the other, "you are a sordid

villain to have kept me here." He went to Toulouse, where he died in a few weeks.

Mr. Sterne, when he had received this cheering notice from his physicians, told Mrs. Sterne that he must return home at once; and it is plain that here was a text for another unpleasant matrimonial discussion as to the point of residence; which ended in each party resolving to go their own road. Mrs. Sterne was determined to stay two or three years more in France, in which "I am truly passive," says he—with the exception that he would rather have his daughter with him in England.

He looked forward with delight to the idea of getting home, for he was heartily tired of provincial France. The States of Languedoc were already met at Montpellier, "a fine raree show, with the usual accompaniments of fiddlers, bears, and puppet-shows;" of which spectacle, too, Miss Knight has left us an admirable photograph; but it had no attraction for him. He will fly from them with alacrity; and, except for grief of losing her whom he calls "my little slut," he will step into his chaise in high spirits. "Every step towards England he fancied will help to put this poor frame to rights." It needed repair sadly. But Mrs. Sterne had her way. The plea was the health of her daughter. He was most earnest in his wish to have them with him; as, indeed, it seems to have been his wish to the last. She selected Montauban for her place of abode, a little town close to Toulouse, which also boasted its "little senate" and provincial "*haute volée*" of the Sword and Gown.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

PARIS.

Mr. Sterne was presently in Paris. He staid, as was arranged, at M. Tollot's hotel in the quartier St. Honoré, where he found "good and generous souls." From Paris he wrote to his "dear Lydia" one of those warm, affectionate letters which are delightful to read, and which, it is apparent, no one with a particle of the Harold Skimpole leaven in his frame, could have written. He sends her down a little present of books—Spectators and Metastasio; "but I beg my girl," writes the father, "to read the former, and only make the latter her amusement." He also sent her a guitar, and tells her good-humouredly not to go on with the drawing, as "you have no genius for it, though you never could be made to believe it." He reminds her of his "last request," which was to make no friendship with the French women;" not that he thought so badly of them *all*, but he was afraid of her acquiring the false French manners then in vogue. "Nay, I am so jealous of you," goes on the fond and careful father, "that I should be miserable were I to see you had the least grain of coquetry in your composition." The fact was, he already *did* see some few

grains, and was fearful lest it should get further developed.

As usual, he found Paris delightful. There were plenty of English, and many Irish and Scotch. Wilkes, staying at the Hôtel de Saxe, Rue Colombier, was laughing loudly with D'Holbach, but at the same time was nervously expecting that sentence of expulsion from the House of Commons which came later. The real Lion of the Hour—just as Garrick had been that of the past year, and Sterne again that of the year before — was David Hume, the new ambassador's secretary—to the amazement of his friends at home, who only knew him as a correct writer and acute thinker. He was heard of in the gayest, the most exclusive salons, with the fairest ladies of the capital, sitting, as it were, at his feet, and listening to Deism, explained in rude limping French.

With him, as well as with Wilkes, Sterne now became acquainted. Of Hume, he heard that story which so well illustrates the niceties of the French tongue, and which he afterwards fitted into his Sentimental Travels. More likely he himself, "at our ambassador's table," had heard "the prompt French Marquis" ask the secretary if he was Home the poet? "No," answered the other mildly. "*Tant pis!*" said the "prompt French Marquis," perhaps too promptly. "It is Hume the historian," some one then whispered. "*Tant mieux!*" said the Marquis adroitly, repairing his mistake. "And Mr. Hume, who is a man of an excellent heart, returned thanks for both." This someway

suggests Mr. Sterne's adventure with Dutens at another ambassador's table; but only a Frenchman could have extricated himself so skilfully. It occurred to him again later, when on his Sentimental Travels.

This was the Lord Hertford, who had just returned Wilkes's visit, though the latter was fashionably considered an enemy of king, country, and all good men. He had also just given that wonderful form of attestation as to Wilkes's illness: "In witness whereof, I have *affixed my hand* and seal," which was amusing all the English in Paris. There were many Jacobites, too, associating with the English travelling Whigs in the greatest harmony, and, among others, the uncle of the Lord of Crazy Castle, and the real *de jure* Lord of Crazy Castle. This was a Mr. Laurence Trotter, who had left Skelton Castle in the '45 troubles, and had been compelled, like many other adherents of the fallen cause, to flutter about foreign courts and capitals. He was, however, "eternally joyous and jockundissimus;" and Mr. Sterne met him at houses of every shade of politics. He dined with him at Lord Tavistock's; and, on another occasion, actually found him at the table of Lord Beauchamp, the ambassador's son. Such happy toleration at a season when the bitterness of home politics was extreme, seems extraordinary.

One Sunday Mr. Sterne was invited to preach before the Ambassador. On a Sunday in January the little chapel in the Faubourg St. Honoré, "près barrière du Louvre," had echoed the dull

utterances of a Doctor Trail, who wearied Wilkes sadly. But now it was filled to overflowing with the most motley crowd. It may be questioned if it ever held such a congregation; there were all nations, believers and unbelievers, Humes, Diderots, D'Holbachs, all gathered to hear famous Parson Yorick. The sermon was worthy of the occasion, and was perhaps the strangest of all his strange sermons. He selected Hezekiah ("an odd subject you and mother will say," he wrote to Lydia)—and giving out the following text—"*And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among all my treasures that I have not showed them,*"—startled the audience wtih—"And where was the harm, you'll say, in all this?"

He then proceeded to explain the whole story, in a pleasant discourse, admirable in style, and very practical in tone. Nothing can be more admirable than his remarks on the motive of human actions.

"There is scarce anything which the human heart bears worse than an analysis of this kind.

"We are a strange compound; and something foreign from what charity would suspect, so eternally twists itself into what we do, that not only in momentous concerns where interest lists under it all the powers of disguise, but even in the most indifferent of our actions *not worth a fallacy*, by force of habit we continue it. So that whatever a man is about, observe him—he stands armed inside and out with two motives, an ostensible one for the world, and another which he reserves for his own private

use; this, you will say, the world has no concern with,—it might have been so; but by obtruding the wrong motive upon the world, and stealing from it a character, instead of winning one, we give it a right, and a temptation along with it, to inquire into the affair." Hé then, with a delicate and dramatic touch, deals with the motives, which govern the ordinary hypocrisies of life. La Rochefoucault had preached on the same text before. "Is it that the principles of religion want strength, or that the real passion for which is good and worthy will not carry us high enough? GOD! *thou knowest they carry us too high — we want not to be, but to seem. Look out of your door*, take notice of that man: see what disquieting, intriguing, and shifting he is content to go through, merely to be thought a man of plain dealing! three grains of honesty would save him all this trouble.

"Another, going on almost in the same track. With what an inflexible sanctity of deportment, he sustains himself as he advances; *every line in his face writes abstain, every stride looks like a check upon his desires*; see, I beseech you, how he is cloak'd up with sermons and prayers, &c. Is there no serving God without all this? Must the garb *of religion be extended so wide to the danger of its rending?* Yes truly, it will not hide the secret; and, what is that? That the saint has no religion at all."

The broken, scattered manner in which it is printed, gives us a hint of the dramatic fashion in which it was delivered. The questions, pauses, and

the very look of the preacher, must have made it a very original performance; not one of his little portraits, too, but would have formed a counterpart in the great vortex of Parisian society; and touched a chord among his motley audience.

"But here comes GENEROSITY; giving—*not to a decayed artist—but to the arts and sciences themselves.* See,—he 'builds not a chamber in the wall for the prophet,' but whole schools and colleges for those who come after. LORD! how they will magnify his name!—'tis in capitals already; the first, the highest, in the gilded rent-roll of every hospital and asylum.

"One honest tear shed in private over the unfortunate, is worth it all."

This is admirable! and what is better, not a mere flourish, but a genuine portion of Mr. Sterne's own private faith, by which he held firmly through. And in these times, when there was sufficient of subserviency in the pulpits, and it was in fashion to deal tenderly with the vices of the great, such plain speaking against the vanity which often lay behind public charity, is not what would come from a false sentimentalist.

Here is another dramatic change: "Behold Humility out of mere pride! and honesty almost out of mere knavery! charity, never once in harm's way! and courage, like a Spanish soldier upon an Italian stage,—a bladder full of wind! Hark! At the sound of that trumpet, let not my soldier run —'tis some good Christian giving alms. O, PITY! thou, gentlest of human passions! Soft and tender

are thy notes, and ill accord they with so loud an instrument!"

Then, as to its being a breach of "Christian charity to think and speak evil of our neighbour," &c., "I will forbear to say so, because I do not think it," for he scorns "all common-place cants." We cannot avoid it—"our opinions must follow the evidence;" were we to do otherwise, "beginning with the great *broad cloak of hypocrisy*, and so down through all its little trimmings and facings, tearing away, without mercy, all that looked seemly, *we should leave but a tatter'd* world of it." This leads him to that harsh judgment commonly passed upon good or even indifferent actions. "Does a pure virgin fear God and say her prayers; *she is in her climacteric.* Does humanity clothe and educate the unknown orphan?—*Poverty! thou hast no genealogies! —see, is he not the father of the child?*" Does a man, he might have added, of a naturally "humane heart," but of not very strong resolution, allow himself to utter kind, generous thoughts and sentiments, he is forthwith credited with that "great broad cloak of hypocrisy," which he puts on as he would a dressing-gown, when he sits down to his desk.

It was altogether a curious homily, and must have entertained the Ambassador and his congregation marvellously. Remarkable, too, in another sense. For he had determined it was to be the last occasion of his ascending the pulpit. Either the exertion, or the agitation, or both together, brought on the old attack—a vessel in his lungs gave way once more, and he nearly "bled to death." This

was sufficient. Yet he was to preach once more before he died—not before an Ambassador, but before a King.

Again, too, had the sentimental heart of Yorick become enchained; and a new charmer, of whose name we are in ignorance, restored him once more to that blissful state, which, he was persuaded, always secured him against any mean or pitiful action.* He tells the whole history with an unrestrained confidence, which shows he considered that Mr. Yorick's *amourettes* were fairly the property of the public, and nothing to be ashamed of. "All which being premised," he wrote to his friend Hall, "I have been for eight weeks smitten with the tenderest pains that ever human wight underwent. I wish, dear cousin, thou could'st conceive (perhaps thou can'st, without my wishing it,) how deliciously I cantered away with it the first month—two up, two down—always upon my haunches along the street, from my hotel to hers,—at first once, then twice, then three times a day,—until at length I was within an ace of setting up my hobby-horse in her stable for good and all. I might as well, considering how the enemies of the Lord have blasphemed thereupon. The last three weeks we were every hour upon the doleful ditty of parting—and, my dear cousin, how it altered my gait and air—for I came and went like any condemn'd carl, and did nothing but mix tears and *jouer des sentiments* with her from sun rising to the setting of the same; and now she is

* Could this be the first appearance of "Eliza"? She must have come from India to England about this time.

gone to the south of France." Allowing for the banter and burlesque of this description, we must accept this as another on the roll of Mr. Sterne's attachments. It could not have been very serious, as he was already talking with complacency of his departure for London:—They had lived, he owns, "shag-rag and bob-tail, all of us, a most jolly, nonsensical life of it."

He started on Thursday, about the middle of May, and was in London about the twenty-ninth, and put up in John Street, with his friends the Thornhills. He was also a good deal in and about the environs. His friend Foley came to London when he was there, but by some fatality they never met, and were "like the two buckets in a well;" and by the first week in August he was back again in York, after an absence of about two years and four months.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

AT HOME AGAIN.

His archbishop was most indulgent, and seems to have given him unlimited indulgence as to leave of absence. Mr. Sterne was now a little scared about his health, and actually, before he had been home a month, proclaimed to his Paris friends that he was seized with a cough; which if it held him three days, they would certainly see him in Paris the week following—for "now," he added, "I abandon everything in this world to health and to my friends. So I am altogether an idle man, or rather a free one, which is better."

Idle as he was, he had taken the trouble of sending money "last post" to his wife,* and of remitting more to Mr. Foley. And in that letter he begins a series of remittances and a series of thoughtful directions for insuring that Mrs. Sterne should be always well supplied with money. Nothing can

* From February to November Mrs. Sterne's "account" seems to have stood thus:—

Feby. in hand	£100	0	0
Aug. 6 ,,	20	0	0
Sept. 29 ,,	50	0	0
Nov. 16 ,,	30	0	0

It is plain from the letters that more was sent than this amount.

be more persevering, more ceaseless, than his injunctions on this head, at home or abroad. In the hurry of his travels he never forgets them. "Betwixt this and Ladyday next, Mrs. S. will draw from time to time upon you for about the amount of a hundred louis. . . . . But you shall always have money of mine upon hand . . . . and she proposes to spend no more than 5000 livres in the year;—but twenty pound this way or that makes no difference between us." From this time forth, all his letters were full of the same injunction—which are not insisted on here, as proofs of any unusual affection—but of a careful thoughtfulness quite opposed to the neglectful character that has been made for him.

It will be seen later how marvellous it was, that the distorted tale of the careless, neglectful, cruel husband, should have ever got abroad. There are a hundred little scraps of evidence sufficient, not merely to refute such a story, but to establish for him—absent as well as present—the character of a kind, careful, *thoughtful* husband. And tried by that vile, but substantial, test of affection—money, which he was always sadly in need of himself, he comes out triumphantly.

By the first week in September he was still busy with the chronicles of "my Uncle Toby's amours." He was getting on but slowly, for the weather was beautiful—and "there is no sitting and cudgelling one's brains while the sun shines bright." The dull season of October, which Edgar Poe sang of, was at hand, "and 'twill be all over in six or seven

weeks, and there are dismal months enow after, to endure suffocation by a brimstone fireside." He was lonely enough at his Coxwould hearth; and he was thinking of leaving "a few poor sheep in the wilderness for fourteen days," and hurrying off to Scarborough, even then a gay watering place. He wrote to his friend Stevenson to join him there; "for a man who makes six tons of alum a week may do anything."

It will be recollected how, a couple of years before, he had written from Paris to the Archbishop in favour of his Coxwould curate, Mr. Kilner. In that letter he was guarded in his testimony, owing to the short time during which he himself had personal knowledge of the curate's behaviour. Later he seems, with true Shandean carelessness, to have signed some more general testimonial; which covered a period beyond Mr. Sterne's own knowledge. And this appears to have displeased his superior; who yet might have recollected the careful way in which Mr. Sterne had before guarded himself on this very point.

Coxwould, Oct. 30, 1764.

"My Lord:

"I know not whether I did do right or wrong in signing the testimonial of Mr. Kilner, my curate's, behaviour for three years, during the greatest part of which time I was in another country and could know nothing at all of the matter; but I believed your Grace's good temper would give the only good interpretation it could admit of, and that all I meant was to certify for his morals and good behaviour for

the little time I knew him before I went abroad, and for the few months I have been with him since my return. I had this, moreover, to have added that he came well recommended; that his character in this parish is very good, and that the man is well liked as a quiet and an honest man, and withal as a good reader and preacher—I think him so myself—and had it not been impertinent to speak to a point, of which your Grace is this moment going to be a judge, I believe him a good scholar also—I do not say a graceful one—for his bodily presence is mean; and were he to stand for Ordination before a Popish Bishop, the poor fellow would be disabled by a Canon in a moment.

"I beg a thousand pardons of y^r^ Grace for taking the liberty of saying a word more upon this than I had strictly occasion for, the whole purport of my letter being simply this—'to assure your Grace I had no intent of deceiving you;' I am sure I could have no interest, for by long and obstinate coughs, and unaccountable hemorrhages in my lungs, and a thorough relaxation of the organ (or something worse) in consequence of them. I am foretold by the best physicians, both in France and here, that 'twill be fatal to me to preach; indeed, nature tells me I have no powers, and the last poor experiment I made in preaching at the Ambassador's chapel at Paris (tho' no larger than y^r^ Grace's dining-room), had liked to have fulfill'd their predictions—for w^ch^ reason, as I cannot discharge my duty myself, 'tis the more incumbent on me to have it unexceptionably done by others.

"I beg pardon, my Lord, once more, for giving you this trouble;

"And wish your Grace very truly and cordially many many years of good health, without all this anxiety to preserve it.

"I am, with duty and esteem,

"Yr Grace's most faithful servant,

"Lau. Sterne."

The Rev. William Mason, the author of "Elfrida," had now been added to the ranks of the Cathedral dignitaries. He was Rector of Aston, in Yorkshire, and through Mr. Edward Montague's interest—working on Dean Fountayne—had obtained the substantial Prebend of Duffield, with some £200 a-year. Through the same channel he also secured the Precentorship, worth as much more; an office which would have specially fitted the Vicar of Sutton, who had such a taste for music, and played so well on the bass viol. But the new Precentor's musical gifts were said to have had an ill effect upon the York choir, he inclining a good deal to the severe Gregorian chanting. Mr. Gray came down and stayed a fortnight with his friend at York, and describes him pleasantly in the Cathedral procession. "The Precentor is being hopefully improved in dignity—his scarf sets the fullest about his ears; his surplice has the most true air of lawn sleeves you can imagine in so short a time; he begins to complain of qualms and indigestion, from repose and repletion; in short *il tranche du Prelat.* We went twice a day to church with our

vergers and all our pomp." Mr. Sterne was at this time abroad; but we should like to know how he and the Precentor agreed together.

At Scarborough he found Lord Granby, Lord Shelburne, and many more. The races were going on, and he remained to drink the waters for about three weeks. This would have really been of service to his health, did not his "playing the good fellow" with his noble friends, impair it as fast as he improved it. Mr. Stevenson had gone to Harrogate with Sir Charles Davers, and others "of the jolly set," whom, Mr. Sterne for a moment thought of joining after his Scarborough campaign. But instead, he returned to his "Philosophical Hut," and sat down steadily to work at "Tristram" and have it ready for the winter.

He had just heard from Mrs. Sterne, with an application for money. He wrote to his banker at once—"as her purse *is low, for God's sake write directly.*" She was now at Montauban, and wrote also in much distress about a hint which the Montauban banker had dropped in reference to her "being separated for life" from Mr. Sterne. He, too, was annoyed at such a rumour, for all their sakes (the tattle of an obscure French provincial town could not affect him), and he wrote kindly and earnestly to Mr. Foley: "Now this is not true in the first place, and *may give a disadvantageous impression* of her."

By November he had his regular "Tristram" instalment ready for the press. He had also conceived the idea of writing sermons for publication,

since he could no longer preach what he published; —a step to which the success of Mr. Yorick's dramatic discourses might well tempt him: for by the year of his death they had "cantered," as he himself would say, through no less than nine editions. He wrote to his Paris friends in high satisfaction with his work. "You will read as comical a tour through France," he said to Foley, "as ever was projected or executed by traveller or travel-writers since the world began. Panchaud will enjoy it. I am quite civil to your Parisians, *et pour cause*, you know. I may see them in the spring."* In the same letter he thinks of Mrs. Sterne: "if she should have occasion before Christmas for fifty Louis, let her not wait a minute." In a few days after, fearful of some mistake or delay through his banker having no funds to his credit, he forwards from York one hundred pounds. At this time too he was very busy, it being "Church militant week," and the old business of enclosing Stillington common having cropped up again, he was much worried by all "the marches and countermarches" ecclesiastical, attendant on this proceeding; but, as usual, found a solace in two young ladies who were staying at the same country house in the neighbourhood—a couple of romping girls (*bien mises et comme il faut*), who would come rushing in upon him, and gave his "judgment many more airings than they wanted." Altogether, he was beginning to be reconciled to his lonely "Philosophical

* Lest it should be turned to his disadvantage, readers are referred to the description itself, which is throughout conceived in a burlesque vein.

Hut;" but it was more from an anticipation of a London Christmas, and the old notion of a tour in Italy, which he was beginning to turn over in his mind. Soothed by this complacent prospect, he could afford to philosophise over his "sweet retirement; wherever we go we must bring three parts in four of this treat along with us; in short, we must be happy within, and few things without us make much difference." We need only read M. Tollot's description of this "happy mortal" to see that there was no dreamy speculation, and that no one, in truth, ever so handsomely "brought three parts in four of the treat" with him in return for his entertainment.

As it came close on Christmas he was away to London with his wares. They did not appear until the 26th of January, 1765, when the almost stereotyped advertisements appeared in the *St. James's Chronicle*, the *Public Ledger*, and other journals: "This day were published, price 4s. sewed, vols. 7 & 8 of the Life and Opinions of TRISTRAM SHANDY, gentleman, by the author of the former volumes."

They were a very thin instalment, and did not exhibit much industry; and abstracting what I have called his first Sentimental Journey, the rest is devoted entirely to the history of Captain Shandy's love. This delightful episode, more continuous and unbroken than anything he had yet done, might take rank beside any of the best Shandean pictures. It was welcomed with delight, and in spite of some coarse touches here and there, which the perverse infatuation of the author would introduce, will

charm generations to come. But the other portions were disfigured by a burst of more than usual grossness, and a coarse licence utterly inexcusable. The old compliment of the English Rabelais, which now in Paris had rung often in his ears, had seduced him into this excess; and the companionship of such men as Wilkes and Crebillon would not be likely to purify his taste. Even the low jest which supports the *Andouillets* story is said to have been taken from a common French jest-book, and could have been told by any French driver or ostler. And yet it is plain that he was insensible to those improprieties, and to the last believed he was fixing himself more securely in the "easy chair" of the English Rabelais.

But much of the responsibility—as was insisted on before—rests upon the shoulders of that public who bought and read and subscribed. "Shandy sells well," was the only shape of protest that found its way to him. But when, a few months later, every thing that was aristocratic, brilliant, and intellectual in England, rushed to subscribe; and sermons preached by the man who preached of the Abbess of Andouillets, came "prancing" into the world, endorsed literally by the whole peerage of the country: in what light was such testimony to be accepted, save as encouragement, or at least tacit approval? Even the critical organs remonstrated gently, rather than condemned. And his old enemy, the *Monthly Review*, in a strange bantering article, cast in the shape of a dialogue, while affecting to reprove only threw an air of burlesque over all.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.

LONDON.

As usual, Mr. Sterne flung himself with enthusiasm into the heart of London delights. The old round of "dinners, a fortnight deep," set in with fury. He found a few seconds to write a line or two to Garrick, then being made a "Lion" of at Paris; and to whom, in all his triumphs, has drifted over disquieting stories of the new actor Powell—the young clerk, who stepped from his desk to the stage, and whom all London was rushing to admire. Mr. Sterne had been frequently to see him, and had frequently taken the whole party where he had been dining, to the box which Mr. Garrick's liberality had furnished him. He balanced the account thus: "I am sometimes in my friend Garrick's house, but he is always in Tristram Shandy's;" and truly, the heavier obligation was on the actor's side. Garrick's house was smouldering in ruins not many years after; but the Shandean Theatre, where Garrick has his niche, shall have a perfect immortality.

Very steady was Mr. Sterne in this friendship. We can see how nervous he was growing about the danger from the new actor's hold upon the town. Most

delicately does he hint to his friend the necessity of his prompt return. "O, how I congratulate you for the anxiety the world continues to be under, for your return. Return, return to the few who love you, and the thousands who admire you. *The moment you set your foot* upon your stage—mark! I tell it you—by some magic irresistible power, every fibre about your heart will vibrate afresh. . . . Powell! good Heaven! —give me some one with less smoke and more fire. There are who, like the Pharisees, still think they shall be heard for much speaking. Come—come away —my dear Garrick, and teach us another lesson."

He always admired Mrs. Garrick—the beautiful Violante: and the terms in which he used to write to Garrick of his lady, shows what has been insisted on all through this book—that all the world understood him perfectly and that he had a sort of special privilege to *jouer les sentimens* with any lady he pleased. "My Minerva," he styles her, "full rapturously will I lead her to the temple,—but you may worship with me or not; 'twill make no difference either in the truth or warmth of my devotion. Still, after all I have seen, I still maintain her peerless. . . . . Adieu. I love you dearly, *and your lady better—not hobbi-horsically, but most sentimentally* and affectionately." And Mrs. Garrick, who exercised a strange fascination over all who came within her circle, had "a real regard for him," and often freely reproved him for his faults.*

Mr. Cradock, the amateur actor and dramatist, once met him behind the scenes at Drury Lane,

* Cradock.

and found him in very low spirits. He suggested to him—what any one familiar with the dramatic power of his writings would long to suggest—that he should try his hand at something for the stage—a comedy, for instance. He seemed greatly struck with the idea; but, "with tears in his eyes," adds Mr. Cradock, professed his utter ignorance of the business of the stage. "That," said the other, "could easily be supplied." There is no doubt that this was but a minor difficulty, which Garrick and his many dramatic friends would have helped him over. The idea had already occurred to him; for, in one of his "Shandys," he breaks out into an apostrophe to his friend: "O Garrick, what a rich scene of this would thy exquisite powers make! *And how gladly would I sit down and write such another to avail myself of thy immortality, and secure my own behind it.*" But the ease and fluency with which whole "Shandys" could be reeled off, was a different thing from the care and even drudgery which work for the stage entails. This perhaps was the true reason. Others, however, as will be seen later, were found to dramatise what he himself had written.

This Mr. Cradock seems to have known him intimately, and once had the satisfaction of making him "laugh heartily," by telling him a story about Tristram Shandy. Mr. Cradock had lent a matter-of-fact gentleman a dry philosophical work, well known to the curious as Harris's "Hermes," of which the gentleman read portions very steadily, and then returned it with the remark, "that all

these *imitations of Tristram Shandy* were very poor things, and *fell far short of the original.*"

It might have been about this time that Mr. Sterne found himself in a company where there were several clergymen, and began to tell comic stories of his parochial experiences. How at York, after preaching at the Cathedral, an old woman whom he had observed sitting on the pulpit steps, stopped him as he came down, and asked where he would preach the following Sunday. Mr. Sterne told her "where he was to exhibit," says the account; and on that day found her again waiting for him, when she again put the same question. The next sermon was to be at Stillington; and to his great surprise, at Stillington he found her. "On which," said Mr. Sterne, telling the story to the clergymen, "I prepared a sermon specially for the following Sunday, expecting to find my old woman as before, on this text: "I will grant the request of this poor widow, lest by her continual coming she weary me." "Why, Sterne," said one of the company, "you have left out the most applicable bit of the whole—"Though I fear not God, nor regard man." It is said the retort silenced Mr. Sterne for the rest of the evening.*

The jesters of society—specially those who forget the cloth they wear—very often expose themselves to these free personalities. For the clerical Tom Hood, there is always an absence of reverence. Even his friend Mr. Garrick could not resist a

* Adam's Anecdotes. Though no authority is given, the story is so exact in local details, I have no hesitation in accepting it as true.

severe remark at his expense. For when Sterne was declaiming loudly against some one who had neglected his wife, and saying he should be hung up at his own door, the actor, thinking of Mrs. Sterne left behind in Yorkshire, said slyly, "Sterne, you live *in lodgings!*"*

It may be remarked in this place, that the burlesquing of scriptural phrases has always been a favourite portion of the *materiel* of wits. Mr. Sterne has been dealt with severely for this practice, which breaks out in his books and letters. Even in the most harmless of these allusions there is always a certain profanity; still we cannot forget how gently another clerical jester has been treated—the Rev. Sydney Smith—whose best things are almost without exception founded upon a scriptural or ecclesiastical basis. This is only another instance of the unfair justice that has been measured out to the Rev. Laurence Sterne.

By April his London campaigning was over, and he had gone down to Bath to recruit. "Shandy sells well," was his account of the success of his new volumes. But his sermons, with which he was now "taxing the public," were now about going through the press. With these he was trying the now extinct fashion of a subscription list, which he reckoned would double his gains. A more dazzling army of patrons never ushered book into the world —not even Voltaire's "Henriade." Well might he boast of it as "the largest and most splendid list

* This little anecdote is given in newspapers of the day, but is to be found in many a book of "ana."

that ever pranced before a book, since subscriptions came into fashion." This roll represented, besides, £300 in money. This was in addition to the sale of the copyright. So that he had indeed made "a good campaign in the field of the literati," and "with all that contempt of money, which '*ma facon du penser*' has ever imposed on me, I shall be rich in spite of myself." Nor did he forget those who were entitled to share his prosperity, for he sent off £100 to Paris.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

NEW DISTRACTIONS.

It was about this period that he became acquainted with a lady of fashion and influence, the wife of Lord Percy,* who lived near Mount Street. For this lady, who was the daughter of the once omnipotent favourite, Lord Bute, Mr. Sterne conceived one of his most desperate sentimental passions. One Tuesday evening he was to dine in Wigmore Street, but starting a little earlier than the dinner hour, strayed into the fashionable Mount Coffee House in Mount Street—called for a sheet of gilt-edged paper, and sat down to write a strangely rapturous letter to this very noble lady who lived close by. The letter has been preserved—a fatal monument of the weak Tristram's infatuation. On his gilt sheet of paper he sets out "what a strange mechanical effect is produced in writing a *billet doux* within a stone-cast of the lady who engrosses the heart and soul of an inamorato"—that she has made "a dishclout of a soul" of him. He complains that he is kept at a distance, and despairs of getting one inch nearer; then breaks out into this extravagant rhapsody:—

"Would not any man in his senses run dia-

* She is set down in the letters as Lady P——; but there can be no reasonable doubt that it is this Lady Percy who is referred to.

metrically from you—and as far as his legs could carry him?—rather than thus causelessly, foolishly, and foolhardily expose himself afresh, &c. . . Why would you tell me you would be glad to see me? Does it give you pleasure to make me more unhappy,—or does it add to your triumph that your eyes and lips have turned a man into a fool, whom the rest of the town is courting as a wit? I am a fool — the weakest, the most ductile — the most tender fool, that ever woman tried the weakness of— and the most unsettled in my purposes and resolutions of recovering my right mind. It is but an hour ago that I kneeled down and swore I never would come near you—and after saying my Lord's Prayer for the sake of the close, of not being led into temptation—out I sallied like any Christian hero, ready to take the field against the world, the flesh, and the devil; not doubting but I should finally trample them all down under my feet—and now I am got so near you—within this vile stone's-cast of your house—I feel myself drawn into a vortex, that has turned my brain upside downwards, and though I had purchased a box-ticket to carry me to Miss —— benefit, yet I know very well, that was a single line directed to me, to let me know Lady —— would be alone at seven, and suffer me to spend the evening with her, she would infallibly see everything verified I have told her.—I dine at Mr. C——r's" (Mr. Cowper's?) "in Wigmore Street, in this neighbourhood, where I shall stay till seven, in hopes you purpose to put me to this proof. If I hear nothing by that time I shall con-

clude you are better disposed of——and shall take a sorry hack, and sorrily jogg on to the play—Curse on the word. I know nothing but sorrow—except this one thing, that I love you (perhaps foolishly, but)

"Most sincerely, "L. STERNE."

This miserable picture, I think, might be accepted as a picture of the struggle that was going on in his mind all through his life. He was naturally of a strong religious temper, as will be seen from many allusions in his letters, addressed to persons like Stevenson, who would only scoff at him if they suspected he was not sincere. And it does seem as though some such degrading struggle—ending usually in defeat—was what he suffered from all through. Whether Mr. Sterne spent the evening with the lady, or went off to the play, used his box ticket, and saw Miss ——, cannot be known now. Most likely he and the noble lady had a pleasant lively evening together. She was unhappily not likely to be too scrupulous in receiving gentlemen: for we can trace her afterwards, as the subject of town talk. Lord Carlisle presently writing home from Italy, wishes to know about the truth of certain rumours:—"I am told," he says significantly, "the assignation was overheard at Almacks." "Gilly" Williams wrote him back the whole story. Many years afterwards came a divorce, and after that, scandal about Sheriff Cotes in Newgate,—altogether a discreditable finish.*

* See Selwyn, Walpole *passim*, and a curious letter in Nicholl's Anecdotes.

By May he was back again at Coxwould, which he began to find not "a sweet retirement," but "a solitude." Thus, when sitting in his summer-house correcting his sermons, he found himself drawn out of "a pensive mood" by a letter from his friend Woodhouse—and to that gentleman, putting aside his sermons for a moment, he wrote his New Art of Love. "In these cases I first endeavour to make the lady believe so—or rather, I begin first to make myself believe that I am in love—but I carry on my affairs quite in the French way, that is, 'sentimentally.' '*L'amour,*' say they, '*n'est rien sans le sentiment.*'" This, indeed, is the true key to all Mr. Sterne's affections. When he could write thus tranquilly of such light topics, he had just met with a serious misfortune, which to one of another temper would have been a very heavy blow.

He had long since handed over his Parsonage at Sutton to a Curate, who took charge of that parish. One night, through the carelessness of this curate, or "of his wife, or his maid, or some one within his gates," it took fire and was burnt to the ground, with all Mr. Sterne's furniture and Mr. Sterne's books, "a pretty collection." The loss was close on four hundred pounds. Mr. Sterne goes on with the story—"The poor man and his wife took the wings of the next morning and fled away. This has given me real vexation, for so much was my pity and esteem for him, that as soon as I heard of this disaster, I sent to desire that he would come and take up his abode with me till another habitation was ready to receive him; but he was gone, and, as I am told,

through fear of my persecution. Heavens! how little did he know of me, to suppose I was among the number of those which heap misfortune upon misfortune. . . . . *God, who reads my heart, knows it to be true*—that I wish rather to share than to increase the burden of the miserable . . . . . as for the dirty trash of this world, I regard it not, the loss of it does not cost me a sigh." This is fresh testimony to his goodness of heart, under a trial that would have tried another man's temper severely; and we can scarcely doubt that solemn appeal. At the moment he wrote, he felt he would be obliged to rebuild the house. "But," he adds, "I lack the means at present, yet I am never happier than when I have not a shilling in my pocket; for when I have, I can never call it my own." The name of this unlucky curate I have discovered. He was Mr. William Raper, and had been there for six years. I find that he stayed with Sterne until the following year, so that his tolerance of the misfortune was not a mere flourish.* In the same key of good spirits he wrote gaily, and with a lively freedom, to a noble friend of his, Lord

* It may be worth while in this place, following up the history of Sutton Parsonage House. As may be imagined, the rebuilding was put off indefinitely, and Mr. Sterne died before the ruins were disturbed. His successor, Mr. Cheap, tried to get something done by the widow, and has left us the result in an indignant entry in the old Sutton Registry:—

"In the year 1764, during the Incumbency of Mr. Laurence Sterne, the Vicarage House was burnt down. Though frequently admonished and required to rebuild the Vicarage House, he found means to evade the Performance of it. He continued Vicar till he died in March, 1768. Andrew Cheap was appointed his successor, and was advised to accept a composition for Dilapidations from the Widow. A suit was insti-

Effingham—the same whom that jovial dramatist, Reynolds, knew intimately. "My good lord," he began, "(for I believe you from my heart to be so, or my pen would not have belied my opinion of you: and since I have begun articles of belief give me leave to add, and I believe you to have power to be anything—but no thanks to you, &c.) As all this," he goes on, "is included in a parenthesis, your lordship has a right to leave it out. It will not hurt the sense. I mean your own, for as for mine, the point has been long settled by the world." He then thanks him for the subscription to the sermons, "as well the *aimable comtesse votre chère mère*, for the honor of her name." Mr. Hall had left him "bleeding to death at York of a small vessel in my lungs. The deuce take these bellows of mine! I must get 'em stopped, or I shall never have to *persiffler* Lord Effingham again." He talks of the York races, where he hopes to meet his friend with "Blaquiere and great Scroope."

Just at this time, too, he was much entertained by the arrival of a letter from an elderly French gentleman at Montauban, in reference to his daughter Lydia. The French gentleman did not know him, but got his address at the Bureau de Poste. He then proceeded to announce that he was in love with Miss Sterne, and would be glad to know

tuted for Dilapidations, but, after a time (the widow being in indigent circumstances), sixty pounds were accepted.

"In April, 1770, the New House was begun, and finished in May, 1771.

"Total amount of suit and Building the House, £376 13*s.* 5*d.*

"ANDREW CHEAP."

how much fortune Mr. Sterne was prepared to give her at present and *how much at his death.* Mr. Sterne took up his pen and answered him in true Shandean vein:—"Sir, I shall give her ten thousand pounds the day of marriage. My calculation is as follows: she is not eighteen, you are sixty-two—there goes five thousand; then, Sir, you at least think her not ugly, and as she has many accomplishments—speaks Italian, &c., I think you will be happy to take her on my terms, for here finishes the account of the ten thousand pounds." It is not known how the elderly French gentleman accepted this ridicule of his proposal. It is certain, however, that Miss Sterne was not married to him.

His health was again warning him to move; in fact, though unconscious of it, he was fast hurrying into consumption. At the end of July he found his "plaguy cough" gaining ground; "and it will bring me to my grave, in spight of me. But while I have strength to run away from it I will. I have been wrestling with it for these twenty years past, and what with laughter and good spirits have prevented its giving me a fall; but my antagonist presses closer than ever upon me." With these forebodings, he had already fixed his departure for October. But by September he received significant warnings to hasten his movements. The old enemy, "the most violent spitting of blood mortal man experienced," again seized upon him; and he had to set off for York to try and recruit himself. This was when Mr. Hall had left him "bleeding to death." These constant attacks seemed at times to dispirit him; and

he spoke of going to York, not for the sake of society, nor to walk by the side of the muddy "Ouse," but "because I had rather (in case 'tis ordered so) *die there than in a postchaise on the road.*"

Still he was the old fitful Yorick, and was the next moment cheerful as ever. A friend dropped in and stayed many hours; listening with delight to his sallies. Going away, the friend met a local apothecary, who asked him how he did. "Ill, ill," said the friend; "I have been with Sterne, who has given me such a dose of *Attic* Salt that I am in a fever." "Attic Salt, sir, Attic Salt," said the apothecary; "I have Glauber Salt in my shop, Epsom Salt—— Oh! I suppose 'tis some French salt. I wonder you would trust his report of the medicine; he cares not what he takes himself." Had this incident occurred but a few years before, it might have served to increase the ridicule poured on the head of a devoted Slop.

As usual, he looked forward with delight to meeting his London and Paris friends again. This thought made him forget all past physical suffering. "I long," he wrote, "to embrace my friends in London." He had finally determined on his long-talked-of scheme—the tour in Italy—where he was to spend nine or ten months, call to see his wife and daughter on his road, and be back by the King's birthday. "What a project!" he exclaimed, with rapture. Profit, pleasure, and health, were to be all combined in the trip. *En attendant,* he wrote to his friend Mrs. Meadows to come down and see him, "I will give you," he wrote, "a roast

fowl for your dinner, and a clean table-cloth every day, and tell you a story by way of dessert. In the heat of the day we will sit in the shade, and in the evening the fairest of all milkmaids who pass by my gate shall weave a garland for you." This sentimental key, which he was always privileged to assume, quite bears out the view of Mr. Sterne's character we have dwelt on all through this book. It was his regular manner with ladies. He winds up with the more prosaic, "God bless you, my dear madam."

At last, about the first week in October, he was up in London once more, and had written to Paris to order a wig—*à bourse*—from Madam Requière in the Rue St. Sauveur; for "it is a terrible thing to be in Paris without a Perwig to one's head."* By the eighth or ninth he had put up the pair of black silk breeches, had taken his place in the Dover stage, and was fairly started on that famous expedition known as the Sentimental Journey. His last thought, however, was careful provision for his family; and before he started he paid into Mr. Becket's hands six hundred pounds, upon which Mrs. Sterne might draw. The packet sailed at nine the next morning, and by three he was sitting down to dinner in Mons. Dessein's Hotel, at Calais,—a hotel which, but for that visit, would not have emerged from the ranks of ordinary houses of entertainment.

* We have Smollett's testimony as to the rigorous laws and niceties of costume which fashion then enforced in Paris.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

YORICK'S LAST JOURNEYS.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

MR. STERNE GOES ABROAD.

In starting on this Sentimental Tour, Mr. Sterne resolved to be guided by principles wholly opposite to those of the professional travellers who had preceded him. The public had of late been inundated with books of travel, all conceived in a cold didactic fashion, containing "observations" on the manners of the various countries, and filled in with passages from old histories and philosophical writers. Such he had happily satirized in his account of his first journey; but since that time the roll of tourists had been swelled by the names of Doctor Smollett and Doctor Sharpe. Smollett's travels, though full of detail, were disfigured by an ill temper and peevishness that was almost amusing. He saw everything through a bilious cloud, and found everything in France detestable. The chronicle of his journey, from the first day to the last, is literally one prolonged snarl. Some excuse may be found in the fact that he was in miserable health all the time, and therefore felt more acutely the rough discomforts of travelling. Another traveller, whose chaise was always a little in front of Mr. Sterne's, was Doctor Sharpe—who brought home a volume of

coarse libels upon the Italian ladies, but was attacked by Baretti, who stood up warmly for his countrywomen. Both these tourists, as good specimens of a class, Mr. Sterne kept before his eyes, and did good service by finding them places in his Sentimental Journey. Otherwise they might have passed without much notice from posterity; and even now every one pauses to ask who are hidden under the unpleasant names of Smelfungus and Mundungus. "I pity the man," he wrote in a famous passage, "who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and cry 'tis all barren." He met Smelfungus in the grand portico of the Pantheon, "'Tis nothing but a huge cock-pit,' said he." And there is a sound generality in this, which applies to yet more than Smelfungus; for many a modern British traveller journeying from Dan to Beersheba by rail, red guide-book in hand, sees only a "huge cock-pit" in most amous relics of the past. Most justly did Mr Sterne say that he only wrote an account of "his miserable feelings." Besides this opening for criticism, which was legitimate in anybody's mouth, he had the recollection of the *Monthly Review* and its bitter critiques to quicken his pen; for it was the knife of Smollett that so cruelly "gashed his jerkin" not long before.

Very different was the spirit with which he himself set out. Here is the text—and when we think of his infirmity (exactly the same as that of Smollett), how much more genial and liberal than the sour creed of the Physician. "What a large volume of adventures may be grasped within the span of his

little life by him who interests his heart in everything, and who, having eyes to see what time and chance are perpetually holding out to him as he journeyeth on his way, misses nothing he can fairly lay his hand on."*

* Compare, too, his pleasant analysis of the various classes of travellers.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

OLD CALAIS.

THE romance of Old Inns is, indeed, fruitful. They have a sort of scenic effect, and are infinitely pleasant either to the moral or the physical eye. The story-teller and the dramatist are often infinitely beholden to them, and their common property-man is often made to let down the scene of the Old Inn, where some stirring bit of action may be looked for.

Yet are there Inns and Inns, just as there are —among the French, at least—faggots and faggots; the English répertoire being sacred, mainly on the score of comforting associations, of stoups and flaggons, of snug kitchens and warm parlours reached with infinite pains, after dangerous roads and heavy riding. A cloud of these sensual memories usually lends romance to the English Inns; and though the Prince of modern British Story-tellers has set us down in many a hostelry to take our ease, still his skilful effects will be found to depend mainly upon such strokes as these. Every one would have loved a night's lodging at the May Pole, enticed by that glowing strip of red curtain, so significant of roaring wood-fires within.

But our French Inns are of another pattern.

About them hangs an atmosphere of a different order, and a sombre, dishonest air. We arrive, late of nights, at an old, twisted iron gateway; are received surlily and with suspicion by a rude landlord; have a meagre supper and indifferent wine; and during the meal are annoyed by the pertinacity with which he keeps looking in. When we retire for the night to an uncomfortable chamber up-stairs (which we do a prey to growing terrors), we can scarcely find a moment's repose, and are disturbed by flashings of lights through the key-hole, and even by an abrupt visit from the host, who excuses himself awkwardly, when he finds that we are awake, and prepared for him.

But of all old Inns generally, and all old French Inns specially, what can boast such dramatic colour as that famous hostelry in the Anglo-French port, where the Reverend Laurence Sterne was in the habit of putting up? About this house and its associations there is an indescribable tone and flavour, and it rises before the memory like a picture. There are strokes of poetry, of scenic effect, of the sentimental, and, above all, of quaint Shandyism. Persons who have not seen it have yet a perfect comprehension of its appearances, and look towards it wistfully. Hosts of the Dragon, Crown, Granby, and Ship Inns are but an earthy community—prosaic all over, and without one redeeming touch to lift them out of the common herd. But the Reverend Laurence Shandy has made Dessein and his house of entertainment, to live for ever.

What a charming tone, peculiar to itself, pervades every page of those delightful travels! What colour, what graceful drawing, what delicate pictures in the manner of Bouchet and Lancry, painted as it were upon a Sèvres teacup, or upon a fan! Above all, what a perfect flavour of the times, and reflection of local tints! We inhale the fragrance of the Bourbonnois—we see the vines growing in the rich Côte d'Or—and we hear the rustic music of the vielle. Past us trots by the swearing postilion, in jack-boots up to his middle, the bells of his huge beasts jingling. From the window we see the mendicants, the monks with horn snuff-boxes, the rural and innocent peasantry, and those charming *grissets* (as *he* spells them), scarcely so innocent, but not the less picturesque. If we go down southward, by express towards Marseilles, Mr. Sterne is in the carriage with us all the way, and we make the Sentimental Journey over again.

The "Through Route" during the last century between London and Paris was always by a place known as "Douvres" and by Calais. The grand English seigneurs on their grand touring, usually halted at the "Ship," in the former place, while they waited for a wind, and looked out for a packet. That "one-and-twenty miles sailing, for 'tis absolutely no further from Dover to Calais," became often a serious "trajet;" and it is common enough to read in the English journals of a century ago that some half-a-dozen mail-packets were due on one day of the week.

What manner of conveyances these "packets" were, even at the commencement of the present century, may be gathered from a spirited sea-piece of Turner's, painted in his earlier manner, now in the national collection. The "packet" is there seen entering the harbour of Calais: a sort of open pilot sloop, or lugger, of some fifty tons burden, with a single main-sail spread. Its small exposed deck is crowded with passengers, who in the course of their passage must have suffered cruelly from their exposed condition. All luckless travellers of the last century, setting out on their "grand tour," dwell at length upon the horrors of this sort of middle passage, in a species of open fishing-boat. Sometimes it occupied a couple of days and a night; sometimes the boat was blown hopelessly up and down the Channel, only too happy to reach some French port, many, many miles from the one they were making for. Lord Chesterfield, writing to the hopeful Philip Dormers he was instructing, speaks of the voyage as a sort of easy average of some twenty-four hours or so; but a good passage, with a fair wind, occupied no more than from four or five hours. Even the road down from London to Dover was paved with discomforts, and the voyager was rifled in a shameless manner at certain houses of entertainment on his way. The port of Dover was a den of licensed freebooters, the Customs officers were rude, merciless, and venal, the porters rapacious, and the famous "Ship" Hotel had a reputation for pillaging its guests conspicuous even in those days of wax-candle and sitting-room imposition.

At Dover, the bewildered traveller had the duty thrown upon him of casting about helplessly, along the wharfs and piers, for a skipper to take him across. The field for importunity and imposition here opened up, may be conceived. There was, however, something like a fixed tariff, the charge being usually from three to five guineas, for which sum the entire of the boat might be secured. These skippers were, however, notorious cheats, and played ingeniously into the hands of the swarms of fleecing molluscs who belonged to the opposite coast. It was a favourite trick of theirs to contrive to arrive about the time when it was low water, and they would have to cast anchor and wait for the tide. Then would the little English craft be invaded by a cloud of boats, and it would be hard for the traveller to resist the temptation of being at once set on shore, in preference to tossing in one spot for many many hours. These boatmen were rough, lawless Frenchmen, who made extravagant terms with their fares, before they would take them—something like a guinea apiece.

Gentle Goldsmith, who could always so pleasantly tell of his own comic distresses, writes home delightfully the story of his landing at Calais. He had gone abroad in such agreeable society as that of Mrs. Horneck and the famous "Jessamy Bride." They were but three hours and twenty minutes going from Dover to Calais, a surprisingly short passage, but were all "extremely sea-sick." They suffered the usual extortion in Dover, and "were in high spirits at coming to Calais, where we were told

that a little money would go a great way. Upon landing two little trunks, which was all we carried with us, we were surprised to see fourteen or fifteen fellows all running down to the ship to lay their hands upon them. Four got under each trunk, the rest surrounded and held the hasps, and in this manner our little baggage was conducted with a kind of funeral solemnity till it was safely lodged at the custom-house." He then goes on to make a burlesque complaint of the importunity of these auxiliaries, when "every creature that had the happiness of but touching our trunks with their little finger, expected sixpence." The Customs, too, expected to be similarly gratified—a feature which is not wholly strange to it even in the nineteenth century.

This "very quick passage" was often exceeded; and only six years before, famous Jack Wilkes, the sybarite of demagogues, flying from general warrants and an unfair prosecution, writes from Calais how he had come across in so short a time as two hours and three quarters. But it is not from "Jack Wilkes," or a hundred such as Jack Wilkes, or Brummel, or the thousands who have left their foot-prints here, that this little town of Calais has its special charm and flavour. It is because there was here a certain famous inn kept by one Dessein, and that it was into the yard of this inn that the famous Mr. Sterne went out and saw the *désobligeante*, and the *remise*, and the pretty French lady, with whom he got shut in so embarrassingly. What delicate water-colour painting! Never were

town or figures put in so airy, and with such charming Watteau finish.

He had started with the famous compliment to the French, "They order this matter better in France," which was destined by a mysterious corruption to get shaped into a wholesale panegyric,—becoming vulgarly, "they manage things better in France." So putting by that "half a dozen shirts and a black pair of silk breeches," he had got down to Dover; "and the packet sailing at nine, by three I had sat down to a dinner of fricasseed chicken." Which ushers in that series of views upon a Dresden service of china which makes up the Sentimental Journal.

The occasion of eating the fricasseed chicken was on the second visit, when Mr. Sterne came that way sentimentally; but at the first he knew "no more of Calais (except the little my barber told me of it as he was whetting his razor) than I do this moment of Grand Cairo, for it was dusky in the evening when I landed, and dark as pitch in the morning when I set out." Still, even with such imperfect means of observation, the quaint look of the miniature old town—so like a bit out of a play—so Shandean and almost grotesque—seems to have struck him exactly as one might have calculated beforehand that it would. Mrs. Carter thought it bright and clean, and describes the women with their long gold earrings sitting at their doors. But it is curious to think she fell in with this very lively Perruquier of Mr. Sterne's, who entertained her wonderfully. Young Horace

Walpole, away upon his travels, doing that grand tour which was indispensable to every gentleman of fashion, and who has walked the galleries of Florence, and Genoa, and Paris, owns to a friend at home, "after all, Calais surprised me more than anything I have since seen." The justness of which impression, every one who recals the look of his first French town, will acknowledge. Mr. Sterne had walked through the great Place, and owned that nothing struck him more, "though I cannot say 'tis either well-paved or well-built; but 'tis in the heart of the town, and most of the streets, especially those in that quarter, all terminate in it." And the old church tower, too, seems to have attracted him, though not so much as it was to do a later visitor,—when a noble artist, and a yet nobler thinker, was to translate its poetry into rich English. "I cannot find words," says the author of Modern Painters, "to express the intense pleasure I have always felt in first finding myself, after some prolonged stay in England, at the foot of the tower of Calais church. The large neglect, the noble mightiness of it, the record of its years written so vividly, yet without sign of weakness or decay: its stern vastness and gloom, eaten away by the Channel winds and overgrown with bitter sea-grass. . . . I cannot tell half the strange pleasure and thoughts that come about me at the sight of that old tower."

The little town has been a marvellous place of passage. What a gay and picturesque thoroughfare —what memories—what persons and personages have left their footprints there. Generals hurrying

to the army—couriers and messengers with despatches, holding the final issue of war in their pockets—getting out chaises at Dessein's, and spurring, *ventre à terre*, to Paris.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

"DESSEIN'S."

BUT it was in the famous Inn of Dessein's that Mr. Sterne sat and eat his "fricasseed chicken," and drank the King of France's health, and was so vexed with himself for his behaviour to that popular Monk of the "Speakers:" and it is this Inn which lends the Shandean flavour to the little town. All the world feels curiosity as to that innkeeper: the innkeeper whose fortune, both with his contemporaries and posterity, the Sentimental Journey made. There is music in the name. Somebody said with approval to a smart lad at Calais, who was learning the waiting profession, "Il a du dessein ce gaillard là;" or some such gratifying testimony; and he was forthwith dubbed by the name. But it was long before he came to be director-in-chief and proprietor of the Hôtel d'Angleterre.

There was already the Hotel of the Silver Lion (and there was a Silver Lion at Dover), which had the monopoly of the through traffic. It was kept by one Grandsire, "a Turk in grain," as he is well described by Mr. Sterne, in a postscript; but who yet sends him his wife and daughter on their journey to France. This must be the Inn whose

sign is seen through the gateway in Hogarth's picture; and this was the Inn where Hogarth himself stayed. The tottering native, bending under the sirloin, is described by Hogarth's own friend, as

A meagre Frenchman, Madam Grandsire's cook.

But, associated with "Grandsire's," is the quaint behaviour of that eccentric clergyman, who was known as "Parson Harvest," and who, it is said, was well known to Mr. Sterne.* Suddenly plunged into Calais, and utterly ignorant of the French tongue, he, strange to say, could not find his way back to the Silver Lion, and was quite helpless as to the means of acquiring information. In this strait, it is said, he thought of a device truly strange and Shandean. He stopped the first passer-by he met; then, putting a silver coin in his mouth, and throwing out his arms grotesquely like paws, put himself into the attitude of a lion rampant. The story goes that he was perfectly understood (but his pantomime was addressed to an intelligent Frenchman), and set right upon his road again. But Grandsire being "a Turk in grain," was not popular with the fine English lords and gentlemen who passed through. Combined with this failing, he was exorbitant in his charges. Mr. Wilkes, living at his house when he was in a manner under a cloud, complains of the "furious expense." For he had been only eight days there, having "neither supped nor drank," and yet his bill reaches to three hundred and twenty-eight livres—something over

* See a letter prefixed to the MSS. of the "Sentimental Journey" in the British Museum.

twelve pounds! The English travellers of fashion, disgusted at last by "the particular hardships imposed on Mr. D——," * anxiously encouraged the opening of a new hotel, to be called the Hôtel d'Angleterre, under the management of young Dessein. The Sentimental Journey did the rest.

He grew to be a sort of fashion. He knew all the tide of nobility that flowed through the little town, and was useful in looking after any packages of theirs passing between London and Paris. He was the great Panjamdrum of the place. Calais, in fact, centred in Dessein. He became a gigantic monopolist. The best of all such provisions as came in, were first submitted to him. He would buy up every "corde" of wood in the town, and earned the execrations of all his fellow-citizens by retailing it at an extravagant price. The Inn, meanwhile, grew and flourished. It was considered to be the most extensive in Europe, and contained squares, gardens, shops of all kinds, workshops, and a handsome theatre. Still, notwithstanding this prosperity, the management broke down, and the famous Dessein went nigh to becoming bankrupt; but it was whispered that, so important was the establishment considered in its international bearings, that the government advanced him a sum of money free of interest, and helped him back to prosperity.

There are many portraits of him, for every traveller made it a point to stay at his Inn, and, in addition, was specially anxious to record that he *had* been there. All these likenesses agree in

* Thicknesse's Travels in France.

setting him forth as a smooth, plausible, greedy, money-getting French innkeeper, turning a penny upon his chaises and Louis d'ors, accompanying all his transactions with stately self-abnegation and a parade of noble sentiments. A gentleman, in passing through, before Mr. Sterne's day, was anxious to hire a light, well-built English chaise, lying in the *remise*. It belonged to a traveller at Paris, who wished it to be sent up to him by the first opportunity. The English gentleman was going beyond Paris, and was very anxious to take the chaise on; but the Innkeeper declined a proposal he durst not have accepted, with much chivalric speaking. "No! It was not his custom to invade the property of others. Trace back every action of his life to its spring, and it will be found that this was his guiding maxim." The traveller ultimately secured one—without any sacrifice of these noble principles—for six Louis.

These details all agree with Mr. Sterne's well-known portrait. And something very like this incident of the chaise would actually seem to have occurred to Mr. Sterne himself. He had been writing his preface in his *désobligeante*, and was followed to his room by "Monsieur Dessein, the master of the hotel, who had *just returned from vespers*, and, with his hat under his arm, was most complaisantly following me to put me in mind of my wants." He spoke of the little carriage "with a shrug *as if it would no way suit me*," and then it occurred to Mr. Sterne that it might have belonged to some traveller who left it to Monsieur Dessein's

care to dispose of. Mr. Sterne then reports the dramatic dialogue that ensued: "'Now, was I master of this hotel,' said I, laying the point of my forefinger on Monsieur Dessein's breast, 'I would inevitably make a point of getting rid of this unfortunate *désobligeante*—it stands swinging reproaches at you every time you pass by it.' 'Mon Dieu!' said Monsieur Dessein; 'I have no interest——' 'Except the interest,' said I, 'which men of a certain turn of mind take in their own sensations. You suffer as much as the machine——' Monsieur Dessein made me a bow. '*C'est bien vrai*,' said he; 'but in this case I should only exchange one disquietude for another. Figure to yourself, my dear sir, that in giving you a chaise which would fall to pieces before you had got half way to Paris—figure to yourself how much I would suffer in giving an ill impression of myself to a man of honour, and lying at the mercy, as I must do, *d'un homme d'esprit*.'"

It is plain the smooth Frenchman had the best of it, and Mr. Sterne owned as much, confessing that he was "but a poor swordsman and no way a match for Monsieur Dessein. He then walked away after him, with a very comic submission, eyeing him first in profile, "then *en face*—thought he looked like a Jew—then a Turk—disliked his wig, cursed him by my Gods—wished him at the devil." It will be seen the epithet, "Turk in grain," had been shifted on from "Grandsires" of the Silver Lion, to Monsieur Dessein.

At the *remise* door, Monsieur Dessein, "diabled

the key above fifty times before he found out that he had come with the wrong one in his hand." When he got the right, he showed Mr. Sterne and the French lady a little carriage "which stood behind," but which Mr. Sterne objected to artfully, as scarcely able to hold two, "at the same time opening the door and getting in." The lively Frenchman saw the opportunity for a neat situation. "Have the goodness, Madam," said Monsieur Dessein, offering his arm, "to step in;" and "the waiter that moment beckoning to speak to Monsieur Dessein, he shut the door of the chaise upon us and left us."

A witty actor, himself not without a touch of the broader Shandyism, had passed through Calais many times on his continental trips, and knew what manner of man was the host of the Hôtel d'Angleterre. Samuel Foote draws him rather coarsely in his Trip to Calais. Kit Cable and another sailor, show the newly-arrived travellers the way to the hotel, saying, "There you will find the best moorings." "They be civil people, no doubt," says the other sailor. "Ay, ay," adds the first, "if you bring a good cargo of cash with you, you are welcome to abide here as long as you list." M. Tromfort, the hotel-keeper, then presents himself, bowing, and gesticulating grotesquely, according to the traditional and received portraits of "frog-eating" Frenchmen. "I have," he says, "a great regard for de Englis, and when dey come over, I never refuse my protection." "Mighty civil, indeed!" the others answer. "Yes,"

goes on M. Dessein (disguised as M. Tromfort), "I 'ave de great *penchant* for dose of your country." He then alludes with satisfaction to a peculiar branch of his business, which has been noticed before, namely, their bringing over "guineas, great lumbering ting," which he converts into "Louis, dat so pretty, and as light as de cork." It will thus be seen that the French landlord's figure and habits were quite an established type, and known to a large class.

Curious to say, about a year after Sterne's death, the famous Sentimental Inn was burnt to the ground. The chamber in which the sentimental traveller drank to the King of France, and grew agitated over the *droit d'aubaine*, and the windows from which he had curiously scanned the "Janatones" of Calais (not connected with the fishing interest) tripping across the Place, were all swept away in the conflagration. But M. Dessein was not to suffer. A whole company of English milords and aristocratic travellers—perhaps the most perverse grumblers at his extortions—came forward gallantly with sufficient funds to build him a fine new hostelry. This was one of M. Tromfort's reasons for his admiration of "de Englis." When his house was burnt by "de fire, I never vas take noding at all from de French—*pas un sous*; but suffer de Englis lors to build my hotel up again *to dere own taste*." This view is confirmed by a sort of travelling Shandean and most genuine enthusiast, who, some forty years back, with his Sentimental Journey open in his hand, pursued all

Mr. Sterne's footprints. Not one of his reputed hotels but he did not explore; not one of those doubtful "Sterne's rooms" but he did not pry into. The whole makes a very pleasant ramble of its own, well flavoured with the Sterne essence. Yet with what fatal result.

What a tide of travellers has flowed steadily from the packets, since those sentimental times, making awkwardly and timorously for the hotel, and asking in their best damaged French to be shown the cynosure of the establishment, "Sterne's room!" What endless processions up-stairs, preceded by obsequious waiterdom, until the door, with the inscription in gilt letters, "STERNE'S ROOM," is reached! The air seems charged with the sentimental aroma, it seems but yesterday he sat in that very chair. The favourite print, too, is over the chimney-piece. A profitable show-place on the whole. People have asked, and paid dearer, for the favour of *sleeping* in Sterne's chamber; endless reveries, meditations, and general magazine literature has been concocted there. Nay, only yesterday as it were, a famous English author—now unhappily no more—passed through—stayed the night at "Dessein's," occupied "STERNE'S ROOM," dreamt on him, meditated on him, could almost see him sitting there in his "black satin smalls," held converse with him, and finally wrote a pleasant "roundabout" on him. Yet see what freaks the imagination will play.

The pleasant detective traveller of forty years ago, was taken, as usual, into "Sterne's Room,"

No. Thirty-One, was shown the Sir Joshua mezzotint over the chimney-piece, and yet was sceptical. The outside of the house was all overgrown with vine-leaves, and the traveller, shrewdly suspecting there might be some record of the date of erection cut on the stone, sent up a man on a ladder to cut away the vine-leaves, an operation which led to the discovery of a tablet,

A. D. 1770.

just two years too late for the credit of "Sterne's Room." This is fatal to all the reverent pilgrimages made for nearly a hundred years back, and, indeed, made every day; fatal, too, to the conjuring up of the "lean, hectic-looking parson" and his "black satin smalls." The waiter, however, in no way disconcerted, offered to fix on another room in the house, and call it Sterne's!

After Mr. Sterne had ceased to pass through Calais, having set out on another far more distant journey, his shade drew many travellers that way. Dessein's fame increased. His hotel was "thought to be the most expensive in Europe." He offered the traveller Burgundy, the best in his cellar, for five livres, which was declined as being monstrously dear! The monk used to come in until a very recent date, asking alms, being preserved as a sort of imperishable institution. Such a one—a gentle, resigned-looking man, almost "mild, pale, and penetrating"—presented himself to the late Mr. Rogers and his friend, as they were sitting over their wine; and the friend, to the gentle poet's annoyance, made some such speech as Mr. Sterne

made to his monk. "Il faut travailler," said Mr. Rogers's friend; and the monk, bowing his head meekly withdrew without a word. There is intrinsic evidence in all Mr. Sterne's characters and incidents that they are taken from life and experience; but these *external* proofs which turn up now and again, are certain testimonies to his accuracy. Mrs. Piozzi must have seen this very famous monk, whom she calls Father Felix, and whose "manners and story," she says, struck Doctor Johnson exceedingly when he came through. The great moralist pronounced that so complete a character could scarcely be found in romance. He had been, like Mr. Sterne's monk, a soldier; knew English; read Addison, and played on the violin. He had been seen there about the year 1772, only five years after the Sentimental Journey, and was remarkable then; so it does seem likely that he was Mr. Sterne's Father Lorenzo. And Mrs. Piozzi was glad to hear that he was alive, and had only gone into Spain.

She sat in Dessein's parlour, and there wrote the first pages of her pleasant Tour. Her sketch of Calais, as seen from the window, is a photograph:—"The women in long white cambrick cloaks; soldiers with whiskers; girls in neat slippers, and short petticoats contrived to show them; postilions with greasy night caps and vast jack-boots, driving your carriage harnessed with ropes, and adorned with sheepskins."

Frederick Reynolds, in those free-and-easy memoirs which he has left behind him, sets out

some droll adventures at Calais. He, too, put up at the famous Dessein's, and, burning with veneration for the author of Tristram, actually stopped the Innkeeper on the stairs to ask him about the great humorist. This was about the year 1775, when Monsieur Dessein was a little advanced in life, and wore a tail, and curls of curious size. The youth asked him boldly if he recollected Mr. Sterne. The other answered, with a true theatrical pose, "Your countryman, Monsieur Sterne, von great, von very great man! and he carry me vid him to posterity. He gain moche money for his Journey of Sentiment—*mais moi,* I made more through the means of dat dan he by all his *ouvrages réunis.* Ha!" He then threw himself into a sort of Tristram attitude, placing his forefinger on his breast, said, "*Qu'en pensez-vous?*" and disappeared with mystery. Allowing for the wild, rollicking tone of these recollections, and the exaggeration which is common to the writings of every comedian, from Tate Wilkinson downwards, it does somehow seem to fit the traditional likeness of the host of the Hôtel d'Angleterre.

Selwyn knew him, and recommended that quasi-daughter of his, Mademoiselle Fagnani, about whom he was nearly crazy, to his care. The wild Duke of Queensberry knew him. In short, everybody knew him. And Oliver—the *one* Oliver, not the stern Puritan, but the gentle Goldy, on that expedition with the Hornecks, before mentioned—came straight to Sterne's Hotel, and put up with Dessein. A famous and delightful humorist, who might surely

have given immortality to, at least, an hotel; but that fit of comic jealousy, which he once assumed because the people in the street kept staring at some painted woman in a gallery and overlooked him, was but a type of his destiny in life.

Even when Doctor Goldsmith and party were sojourning there, a little dramatic scene was to occur. A *valet de place*, a burr not yet extinct, presented itself and offered its services to show the lions, and, as Goldsmith puts it in his own delightful way, was addressing him for ten minutes before it was discovered that he was speaking English. "We had no occasion for his services, so we gave him a little money because he spoke English, and *because he wanted* it." He had bought a ribbon for his wig at Canterbury, and the Calais barber "broke it in order to gain sixpence by buying me a new one." So with Mr. Sterne at Paris, when he was obliged to buy a new wig, his English one being "either above or below his art." "I fear, friend," said I, "this buckle won't stand." "You may immerge it," said the Paris barber, "in the ocean, and it will stand."

That strange, crackbrained traveller, Philip Thicknesse, in one of his "journeys," gives Dessein praise; but coming through a second time, devotes many pages to a savage attack. It seems he had offended him by some attempt at extortion and exhibition of French official roughness. He describes him and his appearance, his one eye, his shrugs and insolence, with much personality.

His greediness does indeed seem to have grown to an extravagant pitch, particularly in that money-changing direction. Mr. Thicknesse saw two English gentlemen pay him a bill of five Louis d'ors, and then offer him an English crown to make up the balance, which amounted to five or six francs. On this he almost grew violent, wanted to detain them and their luggage; and, but for the interposition of Mr. Thicknesse, who advanced them the few sous necessary, would have kept them in pledge. This brought on a battle, which was determined by the removal of Mr. Thicknesse to the Silver Lion. Which behaviour, no doubt, cost M. Dessein more than the few sous of exchange which he gained.

But he had another more profitable customer whose favour indemnified him. That notorious bigamist, the famous Duchess of Kingston, was pleased either with his assistance, his sympathy, or his entertainment, and is actually said to have left him two thousand pounds in her will. And with this notable connexion, the grim figure of the one-eyed Innkeeper—Mr. Sterne's famous host—fades out. At what precise date I have not been able to discover. But a traveller stopping there, in 1815, found that it was not then held by any one of the name. It had come down to his son, and the son's daughter marrying one Quillacq—a familiar name in its way also—still directed the hotel. Finally came the enthusiastic traveller before described, about the year 1825, who found Quillacq "directing," and Mr. Sterne's mezzotint hung up

in No. Thirty-One, and the memory of what was reverently styled "the Great Dessein" almost more tenderly cherished. But the traces of the great sentimentalist had faded. All that could be remembered was, that a *garçon* who had personally attended on him, had died a few years before. Though Mr. Sterne's hotel had been pulled down, the *remise* still remained, and did practical but unsentimental work as a bath-house. By a contrary freak of conversion, the convent of the Capucines—Father Lorenzo's house—had been nearly all levelled, and the chapel which remained was being used as a coach-house. Still the yard was there, and *the remise*, and the corner could be seen on the left-hand side where the little *désabligeante* leant upon its shafts (much in shape like an Irish "covered car," setting the door at one side), and the very spot where Mr. Sterne was talked to by M. Dessein.*

At the present time it is still Dessein's; but its destiny has been accomplished. The work of the "demolitions" has set in, and the *soi-disant* Sterne hostelry is doomed. It will point with yet one more example Mr. Carlyle's gospel of shams, and of the fate of shams. Its epitaph is found among the crowded advertisements of a recent number of Bradshaw's monthly Continental Railway, Steam, Trains, and General Guide

* Five years after Sterne's death the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland passed through and visited M. Dessein's theatre. They were insulted by the actors for their stinginess, the Duke having sent them only three guineas. In return the actors sent the Duchess a bouquet by a candle-snuffer.

CALAIS.

HÔTEL DESSEIN.—L. DESSEIN, the proprietor, has the honour to inform his numerous Patrons and Travellers in general that, after the 1st of January, his Establishment will be transferred to the HÔTEL QUILLACQ which has been entirely newly done up, and will take the name of "HÔTEL DESSEIN." The Premises of the old Hôtel Dessein having been purchased by the Town of Calais, it ceases to be a Hôtel for Travellers.

We can have no difficulty in accepting the charmingly dramatic series of scenes at Calais, as true in nearly all details. The scenery, as we have seen, is exact. The court-yard, the choosing of the chaise, the delightfully natural and truly French incident of the Innkeeper shutting up the lady and Mr. Sterne in the chaise to see if it would hold two; the easy conversation; the lady herself, who is worthy of Leslie; the "*débonnaire* French Captain," and the monk—the "Guido" monk; these make us linger over "Calais," and, with regret, we follow Mr. Sterne on to Montreuil.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

MONTREUIL.

All along this journey he spoke that terribly bad French, at least if what he spoke, be reflected in what he wrote. A demon of perverseness would almost appear to have guided his fingers; for, with a strange blindness, he seems unconscious of his blunders, and did not take the ordinary simple precautions of advice, or even make the common corrections. The original MS. of this journey is still to be seen, carefully and cleanly written out from his rough draught, and as carefully gone over for final alterations. And yet the French blunders are jealously preserved.

The inn at Montreuil where Mr. Sterne put up, though he has not mentioned its name, or its proprietor's, can be discovered—yet with some difficulty. Thirty years ago, in the Diligence times, all the inns along the route claimed to be Mr. Sterne's inn, and each had a "Sterne's Room," with the portrait after Sir Joshua over the chimney-piece. In Montreuil there were two claiming the distinction, and the visiter was shown two Sterne's Rooms and two pictures. One was the Hôtel de l'Europe,* whose claim

* The waiter told a traveller inquiring on the subject in 1826, that it must be Sterne's Inn, *for*, it was built thirty years before.

vanishes in a second, it only dating from the beginning of the present century. But there was another old inn, reputed the oldest in the town, situate on the Green, where the fêtes and merry-makings have always been held, and where La Fleur danced and played his fiddle, and which bore the name of the Hôtel de la Cour de France. It was kept, thirty years ago, by the family of Varennes; and the Varennes told travellers the inn had been in their family, from father to son, beyond the recollection of men.

Readers of Selwyn's memoirs will recollect a certain Doctor Warner, a free and worldly clergyman, who used to write amusing letters, and do disagreeable business for the witty George. This person wrote a lively French letter to one Varennes, an hotel keeper at Montreuil, in which he alludes to his having "the best cook in Europe," praises his fricandeaux, and describes the hotel as a place where "all nobles of Europe put up." This is quite sufficient. Where were all the nobles, there was sure to be Mr. Sterne. And when Doctor Warner knew the innkeeper, Mr. Sterne was only just dead. The legend in the hotel was, that Sterne had given them the privilege of calling it Sterne's favourite house: and they put into the guest's hand a little card, with the following inscription:—

VARENNES.
HOTEL DE LA COUR DE FRANCE.
A COTE DE LA POSTE AU CHEVAUX,
MONTREUIL.
STERNE'S FAVOURITE HOUSE.

We have even a sketch of the landlord, who corrected Mr. Sterne's French, and who came in to tell him "of the clever young fellow who would be proud to serve an Englishman." Dr. Warner rallied him on being "*gros crevé*," and "*bon rieur*." We see his rotund figure standing before Mr. Sterne, and telling him how *un milord Anglois presentoit un écu a la femme-de-chambre*.*

Janatone was the landlord's daughter, and Mr. Sterne had seen her already in his first journey before, sitting at the inn door, and dropping stitches in the stocking she was making.

It must have been this very *Janatone*, that the lively Mrs. Piozzi, on her wedding tour some years later, met at the Montreuil inn. This *fille* was eighteen years older, but had not lost her piquancy. It struck her more than anything in the whole town; just, indeed, as she had made so lively an impression on Mr. Sterne. She complained of the courier's rough speech. "Il parle sur le haut ton, Mademoiselle," said Mr. Thrale's widow, "mais il a le cœur bon." "Oui-dà!" the fille replied smartly, "mais c'est le ton qui fait le chanson."

It was apropos of his daughter that the stout landlord gave Mr. Sterne the hint about the proper use of *tant-mieux* and *tant-pis*, and which are "two of the great hinges in French conversation." This is, in truth, but a variation of a story which Wal-

* All through Mr. Sterne confounds "a lady's-maid" with "a housemaid." The reader need scarcely be reminded that *presenter* has not the meaning of giving a present; and that, even if it had, there is a mistake in the grammatical case.

pole had been circulating a year or two before about a Mr. Churchill—one of the Marlborough Churchills—whom Walpole's sister had married. A Frenchman asked this gentleman if he was Churchill "le *fameux* Poète?" and the other answering that he was not, the Frenchman said bluntly, "*Ma foi, Monsieur, tant-pis pour vous!*" * And it was this "tant-mieux" M. Varennes, that brought in La Fleur, the most famous of valets. For Mr. Sterne was prepossessed at the first glance with his "genuine look and air," and at once hired him. He had lost his portmanteau from behind his chaise, and got out in the rain, and "up to the knees in dirt," to help the postilion to fasten it on, before he found out that he required a servant. La Fleur was exactly suited to him. He could, indeed, professionally only "make splatterdashes, and play on the fiddle, beat a drum, and do something on the fife,"—but "a Frenchman can do everything." He was just fitted for Mr. Sterne, having a sort of even "festivity of temper," which, through all annoyances and discomforts, never was disturbed. He had, besides, a small cast of a coxcomb, but more a coxcomb of nature than of art; "was always in love;" and, as the landlord remarked, when pointing him out from the inn, taking leave of the village girls, "*C'est un garçon de bonne fortune!*" †

* We may add to these two stories, a third of the French preacher, whose text was the Magdalen. "Madeleine pécheresse, *tant-pis;* Madeleine repentante, *tant-mieux; tant-pis, tant-mieux, voilà tout mon discours!*"

† "*Bonnes Fortunes,*" must the landlord have said. To put together a few more of these droll mistakes of Mr. Sterne, La Fleur

Then comes the well-known beggar scene, when Mr. Sterne was getting into his chaise; La Fleur's adventure on the bidet; and the pathetic picture of "the Dead Ass" before the door of the post-house at Nampont. And the traveller of this day will have to halt "at the foot of the steep hill, about a league from Nampont," where Mr. Sterne was shouting to his postilion—one more bit of testimony to his wonderful accuracy. So he passed on to Amiens, where La Fleur played on his fife while the servants danced, and where Mr. Sterne copied the drummer's letter, and sent it in to Madame Lambert. Before the 20th of October, he was in Paris, and had put up at the Hôtel de Modène, Rue Jacob, in the Faubourg St. Germain.

speaks of his horse as being "*le cheval le plus-opiniâtre du monde;*" a mysterious adjective, which no Frenchman would ever use in such a sense. "It is not mal a propos to take notice here," instead of hors de propos. Madame Lambert writes to him that she has been prevented telling her story from some "*penchant*"—another non-natural sense. At the Amiens Hotel there was a *femme de chambre;* and in the same page, "Madame de Lambert sends her fille de chambre."

He must, however, have remarked a change from the time he first came that road. Walpole noticed a great improvement—the "worst villages had grown tight, and wooden shoes disappeared." But he was "famished for want of clean victuals and comfortable bread and butter." It is curious, too, that Smollett, with all his dissatisfaction, picks out the hotels in Montreuil and Amiens, like Mr. Sterne, and owns he got "good accommodation" at those places.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

A SECOND VISIT TO PARIS.

PARIS at the season of this second visit was very gay, and full of English. It was very gorgeous; and Mr. Sterne, as he stood at the hotel window in his "dusty black coat," looking out, seeing "all the world in yellow, blue, and green, running at the ring of pleasure, the old with broken lances, the young in armour bright, which shone like gold," grew dispirited. When he saw the magnificent equipages, and the lavish decoration of footmen, which was then a fashion, no wonder he thought "a poor prince who is weak in cavalry, whose infantry does not exceed a single man," had best quit the field.

But morally, a more striking change had taken place. The taste for amateur philosophy had developed into a *fureur*. Men and women, and fashionable men and women, had all become, or affected to be, *philosophers;* and followed out their worship, with the stern self-sacrifice, of true children of fashion. This craze infected every boudoir, and destroyed every pleasure. Conversation—parties—everything had grown insufferably stupid.

Walpole, who had been there about a month, was digusted with the change. Perhaps he did not

relish the homage paid to the Scotch Secretary. He found nothing but barren philosophy; and dull whist parties at the President Hènault's, redeemed only by his unapproachable cook. He was pining for a good laugh, and yet such jesters as Foote, Wilkes, and Sterne were then in Paris. But Wilkes, he said, never made him laugh. Sterne, he owned, never could make him laugh; and Foote, he rather coarsely added, he could see at home any night for five shillings.

There were "swarms of English" in Paris; but he could not bring himself to mix with them. Among these swarms of English was Sir James Macdonald, a young Scotch baronet, a great friend of Mr. Sterne's. About this young man, though no more than a mere sketch in literary history, a deep interest seems to hang. He is seen for a moment in Boswell's Tour, and exercised a sort of attraction on every one he met. He wrung from Walpole the praise of being "a very extraordinary young man for variety of learning," and was the friend of all that was polite and noble in his age. The chief interest about him, comes from his untimely death, which took place at Rome, when he was but four or five and twenty; and two letters, charmingly natural, and almost pathetic in their simplicity, are excellent evidences of his gentle disposition.

Here too was another friend of Mr. Sterne's, Mr. Crawford, well known as "Fish" Crawford, to whom the weak, elegant Carlisle used to lose large sums of money. "One of the gayest young gentlemen," says his valet, "and the greatest gambler

that ever belonged to Scotland." Here too was Lord Ossory, Mr. Fitzmaurice, who had been a pupil of Adam Smith's, and Lord William Gordon, all friends of Mr. Sterne; and here too was that blasphemous parson, John Horne Tooke.

Mr. Sterne was not likely to let the laugh languish. In French society he was more popular than ever; and he has given an amusing account of the arts by which he turned the grave, philosophizing mania to his own profit. On his first visit he had made friends in all directions. He knew the Count de Bissie, who affected to be reading Shakspeare when he called, the Marquise de Lambert, the old Marshal de Biron, "who had signalized himself by some small feats of chivalry in the Cour d'Amour," and many more. The marshal talked of a visit to England, and of the English ladies. "Stay where you are, I beseech you, Monsieur le Marq*uise*, Les Messieurs Anglaise (*sic*) can scarce get a kind look from them as it is." The old beau invited him to supper at once. His compliment to the Farmer-General, M. Popelinère, at whose concerts we have seen him "assisting," was just as skilful. He was asking about the English taxes; they were considerable, he heard. "If we knew how to collect them," said Mr. Sterne, with a bow. A lady, Madame de V—— (this must have been Madame de Vence, a descendant of Madame de Sévigné), placed Mr. Sterne by her on the sofa to discuss religion. She believed nothing. "There are three epochs," says Mr. Sterne, in one of his most acute observations on society, "in the empire of a Frenchwoman. She

is coquette; then deist; then *dévote*. The empire during these is never lost; she only changes her subjects." Madame de Vence was only vibrating between her first and second. Yorick took her hand and mildly remonstrated with her. There was not a more dangerous thing in the world than for a beauty to be a deist. The restraints of religion and morality were the outworks which protected her. "We are not adamant," he continued, "and there is need of all restraint, till age in her own time steals in and lays them on us; but, my dearest lady," said I, kissing her hand, "it is too soon—too soon."

Mr. Sterne had the credit all over Paris of converting Madame de Vence. She told Diderot and the Abbé Morellet, that "in one half-hour I had said more for revealed religion than all their encyclopædia had said against it." She postponed the epoch of her Deism two years.

In this fashion he became popular, and heard on all sides such flattering testimonies as "*pardi, ce Monsieur Yorick a d'ésprit. C'est un bon enfant;*" and abundance of such praise. But to his credit he grew ashamed of "the dishonest reckoning," though at this price he could have "eaten and drank and been merry all the days of my life at Paris." It seemed to him the gain of a slave. He had the courage to make this honest confession, although he had many French subscribers to his book, and of this very coterie.

It is pleasant to follow in Mr. Sterne's footsteps, and we can even track him to his Paris hotel. There

were very many Hôtels de Modène in that time—forty years ago there were ten to be counted—but to Sterne's Hôtel de Modène we find a guide in the famous *femme de chambre* whom he met in the bookseller's shop, buying "Les Egaremens." He had sent for a perruquier to set his hair to rights; and then "taking down the name of the Hôtel de Modène, went forth for a walk from where I lodged," —to have a look at Paris.

It was evening, and he thought he would visit the Opéra Comique—so turning into the glove shop, he asked the way of that "beautiful grisset,"* who was sitting "on the far side of the shop, facing the door," working a pair of ruffles—a little scene which inspired Newton with a fresh Leslie-like cabinet picture. "'You must turn, monsieur,' said she, going with me to the door of the shop, 'first to your left-hand—*mais prenez garde*—there are two turns, and be so good as to take the second; then go down a little way and you'll see a church, and when you are past it, give yourself the trouble to turn directly to the right, and that brings you to the foot of the Pont Neuf, which you must cross; and there anyone will do himself the pleasure to show you.' She repeated her instructions three times over to me, with the same good-natured patience the third time as the first"—a trait, as well as that getting up and going to the door, truly French, and consistent with their good-natured politeness to strangers.

* This is clearly imported from the first journey, for by this time he would have known Paris by heart.

Now to see how marvellously accurate is Sterne in his localities. He wished to go to the Opéra Comique—"Les Italiens," then—at the Hôtel de Bourgoyne, Rue Mauconseil. Assuming that he was coming from the Rue Jacob, the "grisset's" directions would lead him directly to the theatre door. The "two turns" were the Rue des Petits Augustins, and the Rue de l'Echaudé, the latter of which he was to "be so good as to take," and which brought him to the Rue de Seine; the church, which was down a little way, was the "Quatre Nations," which brought him to the quai, and to the Pont Neuf. When the performance was over, which must have been early, he stepped into the bookseller's shop on the Quai de Conti, to buy a Shakespeare, and there he met the *femme de chambre.* Even now on that little quai we see a clump of black, gloomy mansions—ancient and decayed—all of which are as old, as at least Mr. Sterne's day. When we look across the river, we know that we are looking at the bookseller's house.

Mr. Sterne had forgotten his way home, and he went part of the way with her until he reached the Rue de Nevers, where they were to take different roads. "Is this the way, my dear," said he, "to the Hôtel de Modène?" She said it was, or, "that I might go by the Rue de Guénégaud, which was the next turn." She, herself, was going to the Rue St. Pierre, to which the Rue Guénégaud would also take her; and it would lead Mr. Sterne to the Rue Jacob, and to his hotel. This House was said to be opposite the Rue des Deux Anges, on the side of the

Rue des Petits Augustins;* and forty years ago there was a Hôtel de Modène kept at No. Twelve, which had been transferred from a dark sombre building next door, which was the original hotel.†

There is yet one more locality to which we may follow him. The "long dark passage" from the theatre to the street, lit by "a small candle, the light of which is almost lost before you get half way down," and where the two mysterious ladies were waiting. This, too, is accurate. The theatre was destroyed not long after; but there used to be a fragment of the wall, which was inserted into the more modern Halle aux Cuirs, and which exhibited a long narrow passage, with an old grated door at the end.

He could have stayed scarcely three weeks, and then set out on his Italian tour. He made one of a party, and travelled with some "English of distinction." He also took his servant, La Fleur, with him.

This famous valet has a history of his own. After Mr. Sterne's death he often came to England, sometimes as a servant‡ to travelling gentlemen, sometimes "as an express." Friends of Mr. Sterne, who had heard of him, or were glad to meet with him, used to ask him about his deceased master, and the Sentimental Journey, and got from him a few facts which crept into the

* See an intelligent French commentary on the "Sentimental Journey." Didot: 1801.

† See "European Magazine."

‡ Not a sergeant, as Sir Walter Scott quotes it.

public journals of the day. These valet chronicles* are in most cases suspicious; the "valet-mind," being in its most favourable aspect likely to take a mean and distorted view of domestic events, but more frequently inclined to fill-up their meagre recollections with invention. The La Fleur narrative, though theatrical in parts, is not trustworthy. He was born in Burgundy, and ran away from his parents to Paris at eight years old. He was found one day on the Pont Neuf by a recruiting sergeant, and enlisted by him as a drummer. For six years he beat the drum, and "made splatterdashes," and in two more would have obtained his discharge; but his gipsy temper again prompted him to run away. He came to Montreuil, was engaged by Sterne, "ragged as a colt," and was now, in the first week of November, a most unseasonable time for travelling, setting off with him to Italy. A little farther on we shall take up his life and sham adventures.

* A few scraps are to be found in Davis' Olio, and were copied by Sir Walter Scott; but the more important passages were unaccountably passed over.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

ON A GRAND TOUR.

He got down to Lyons very pleasantly, having first seen "Maria" on the road near Moulines. I am inclined to believe that this Maria picture has been much coloured up; and that finding her so admired in his last volume, Mr. Sterne could not resist the temptation of bringing her on again. No doubt he found the hint near Moulines, in some distressed girl sitting on the roadside, who may have moved his compassion. But the valet being questioned by the English gentlemen, remembered the whole story, "and burst into a pathetic lament." "When I pass through that town," he said, "her aged father and mother run out with tears to see me; we weep together. I wish I may never pass through that town again." This we may dismiss as a pure effect of his valet mind.

At Lyons, the party halted for some days, and had "a joyous time." The commandant was very hospitable, and had Mr. Sterne to dine and sup every day. He left behind him there Lord F. W.——, and about a dozen English. We are able to indentify one at least of the "dozen English" who were then at Lyons, and that an Englishman of some mark—

John Horne Tooke—who had been in Paris, having flung away his clergyman's gown at Dover, and was flaunting it, not in a "dusty black coat," but in "a suit of scarlet and gold," or "white and silver," or "blue and silver."* He met Sterne at Lyons every day for a week, and planned to meet him again at Sienna during the summer. They often spoke of their common friend, Wilkes. But Tooke remarked that though Mr. Sterne mentioned the demagogue "handsomely," yet he never spoke of him with warmth or cordiality. "Forgive my question," wrote that strange clergyman to Wilkes from Montpellier, "and do not be annoyed if I enquire, is there any coldness between you and Sterne?"

It is very curious to trace the impression of Tooke's remark about Wilkes, on Mr. Sterne. It is plain that he remarked this "coldness" to Sterne himself, for in the very next letter the latter wrote to Paris from Pont Beauvoisin,—he is pointed in his remembrances,—"If Wilkes is at Paris, *I send him all kind wishes.*"

They were likely to have met again, as proposed. Tooke went first to Montpellier, displayed his unclerical "blue and silver" at Sienna, and succeeded in captivating an Italian young lady, until some one betrayed his profession, and he was universally tabooed.† It is to Mr. Sterne's credit, that abroad, he never tried to conceal his cloth, but was almost ostentatious in his black suit and "sattin smalls."

* See the inventory of clothes he left with Wilkes, who sent them to Panchaud's. Life of J. H. Tooke.

† Rogers's "Table Talk."

They got on to Pont Beauvoisin,* where begin those wonderful Savoy passes which have since become marvellous trophies of engineering; but there they were obliged to stop,—for the rough mountain weather suddenly set in. It began to rain as "though Heaven and earth were coming together;" and every little stream began to swell into a river. Pont Beauvoisin is on a small mountain rill, called Guiers Vif, and presently Mr. Sterne and his friends found themselves blockaded in the town, cut off on both sides by furious waters, and prevented from either going on, or turning back.

They were kept prisoners by these "two pitiful rivulets" until the waters subsided, and they were able to set out again. "When you have gained the top of Mont Taurira, you run presently down to Lyons. Adieu then to all rapid movements. So I contracted with a voiturin to take his time with a couple of mules, and convey me in my own chaise safe to Turin, through Savoy."

The voiturin was eight days taking him through that grand mountain scenery. Again at the close of the story of his journey we have delightful little glimpses, full of local colour and exquisite pastoral effect. Charming, indeed, that night piece at the hamlet, while he looked on at where the "old man" played the vielle for the dance, and the girls ran to tie up their hair—which makes a perfect *pendant* to that other picture which he saw in the Bourbonnois, on his first journey. He was delighted

* Mr. Sterne, as usual, mistaking the names of places, calls it Beau Pontvoisin.

with that "poor, patient, quiet, honest people," and was tempted into the false prophecy, that "your poverty *will not be envied you by the world*, nor will your *valleys be invaded by it.*"

He passed by the perilous beauties of Les Echelles, Aiguebelle, and St. Jean, running risks from "the sudden turns and dangers of the roads; the difficulties of getting up, the horrors of getting down—mountains impracticable—and cataracts which roll down great stones from the summit, and block up the road;" until at last he came to the picturesque little town of St. Michel. Late of a wintry evening he was pushing on to Modane, through mountain, wind, and rain—a "tempestuous night"—when the voiturin halted his mules suddenly, and found the road blocked up by a huge fragment of rock which the cataract of the Arc had brought down from the mountains. The rude peasants of the place were hard at work labouring to clear the road; but late as it was, and long as they had been working, it would take two more hours before the road would be open. The whole is a picture: the darkness, the tumbling cataracts, the wind, the rain; the grand mountains; the peasants labouring by torchlight, and the voiturin and his mules waiting expectant, with the pale face of Mr. Sterne looking from the window.

We can only regret the infatuation which could have led him to disfigure all with the coarse suggestion which soils the last page of the "Sentimental Journey." Otherwise the scene is admirably graphic and humorous, stamped with a genuine air

of truth, and did not need that fatal touch at the end to have been a most ludicrous and Shandean embarrassment. Mr. Elwin has truly remarked that these gross strokes have brought with them a heavy penalty; for they have dragged down with them those exquisite scenes which would have made his book a delightful drawing-room book, and consigned them to a proscribed corner in the library.*

But this dramatic scene did not occur to Mr. Sterne himself. I have been enabled to trace it as "a good thing," which he heard from one of his jovial friends. It was an adventure that befel "John Crawford, Esq., of Errol," better known as "Fish" Crawford, a wild gambling Scotchman, and one of the March-Carlisle set. Him Mr. Sterne met both in Paris and London; and from him he heard the embarrassment of the lady at the rustic inn, where there was no room.

It was between Verviers and Aix-la-Chapelle that "Fish" Crawford met her. The house was full, and he had got the best bed-room, off which there was a closet. It was a Flemish lady and her maid, instead of a Piedmontese lady, as Mr. Sterne put it? Madame Blond was her name. She sent up her compliments, "would she be allowed to sit in the gentleman's room until bed-time?" Mr. Crawford was "very complaisant." They played cards together to decide who should have the large bedroom or

* In the Guide Books, Modane is usually set out as the locality of "the last scene in the 'Sentimental Journey,'" whereas it took place five miles from that town.

the little closet inside, and the lady lost. It is very curious, stumbling on this, and, more curious still, hearing it from the mouth of a valet. But though Mr. Sterne tells his version with infinite humour, the delicacy is all on the side of the valet.*

He reached Turin at last, and was established there by the 15th of November. He was delighted with his first Italian city—just as he had been with Paris; and was "very happy" during the fortnight he stayed. With his usual success, he had been there scarcely a day before he had been secured at half-a-dozen houses of distinction. He was to be presented to the King, and after that ceremonial would have his hands full of engagements. Turin was at that time a gay little capital, though under the tyranny of a strict etiquette, and was very stately in all its manners and observances. He found no English there but his friend Sir James Macdonald and Mr. Ogilvy, so all this festivity was from native families. Lord Carlisle, who came there a little later in a love-sick dejection, was struck with the beauty and youth of the ladies, and the rarity of elderly ladies, as compared with Paris; where, as he rather unhandsomely put it, "that species of lumber" abounded.

After a "joyous fortnight," during which they met with "all kinds of honours," they departed reluctantly. The valet La Fleur says they remained six weeks; but he was telling his story nearly twenty years afterwards, and the inaccuracy is

* See the "Travels of John Macdonald, a cadet of the family of Keppoch," who was servant to Fish Crawford.

natural. Sir James Macdonald and Mr. Sterne were to travel together through Milan and the smaller Italian cities which dot the "Grand Tour," on to Rome. They would both like to have stayed, "But," said Mr. Sterne, "health on my side, and good sense on his, say 'tis better to be at Rome." As it fell out, it will be seen that these two motives were curiously shifted.

From Turin he found time to write to Mrs. Sterne, under cover to his banker, and then entered his chaise. Their next stage was Milan.

Here it was that Mr. Sterne met a little adventure which he tells very pleasantly. He was going to Martini's concert,* and was just entering the door of the hall, when he met an Italian lady, the Marquesina F——, "coming out in a sort of a hurry; she was almost upon me before I saw her. So I gave a spring to one side to let her pass. She had done the same, and on the same side too, so we ran our heads together. She instantly got to the other side to get out. I was just as unfortunate as she had been, for I had sprung to that side, and opposed the passage again—we both flew together to the other side, and then back, and so on; it was ridiculous; we both blushed intolerably; so I did at last the thing I should have done at first. I stood stock still, and the Marquesina had no more difficulty." After a moment's hesitation, Mr. Sterne, than whom no one was more skilful in improving an opening, ran after her; and the description of

* There was a Padre Martini at this time in Milan, who had a name in the musical world.

his behaviour is worth quoting, as a specimen of that easy manner which was the secret of his fascination. He first apologised for his awkwardness, saying, "it was my intention to have made her way. She answered she was guided by the same intention towards me, so we reciprocally thanked each other. She was at the top of the stairs, and seeing no *chicesbee* near, I begged to hand her to her coach. So we went down the stairs, stopping at every step to talk of the concert and the adventure. 'Upon my word, madame,' said I, when I had handed her in, 'I made six different attempts to let you go out.' 'And I made six efforts,' replied she, 'to let you enter.' 'I wish to heaven you would make a seventh,' said I. 'With all my heart,' said she, making room. Life is too short to be long about the forms of it. So I instantly stepped in. And the acquaintance that arose out of this little transaction," Mr. Sterne adds, gave him more pleasure than any one he made in Italy.

The Marquesina F—— seems a name almost hieroglyphical; but curious to say, we can discover ho she was. It is pleasant to know every one who came in contact with Mr. Sterne. Arthur Young passed through Milan some years later, and saw this very lady, but, gifted with less discretion than Mr. Sterne, gave her name. It was the Marquesina Fagniani. Which touches another chord of association; for this was the very lady who figures so curiously in Selwyn's Life, the mother of little Mie Mie, the little child about whom he made himself almost ridiculous, exciting the smiles and

pity of his friends. The whole makes a strange chapter in the history of human absurdity.*

From Milan they travelled on to Parma. They travelled "*à la hâte*," and many places, they merely passed through. They visited Piacenza and Bologna, halting a short time at each (La Fleur adds the little Duchy of Modena to the list), and having weather all the time "as delicious as a kindly April in England," found themselves suddenly among the deep snows of the Apennines. They were at Florence by the 18th of December, and remained, Mr. Sterne says, but three days "to dine with the Minister (Walpole's Sir Horace Mann, just promoted to be Envoy)," where they were to meet Lords Townshend and Cowper;† and then they looked forward "to treading the Vatican, and being introduced to all the saints in the Pantheon," within five days. He wrote again from Florence to Mrs. Sterne.

They then passed on to Rome, and hurried down to Naples. There he put up at the Casa di Mansel, and remained several weeks. It seems to have been charming. He revelled in the delightful air of the place, and the meagre figure of Yorick was actually "growing fat, sleek, and well-liking, not improving in stature, but in breadth." He enjoyed himself thoroughly. There were some five-and-twenty English there; but he found his way, as usual, into the best Italian society. He had letters to "Prince Cardito d'Offredo," who behaved to him, according to the quaint and more

* "Arthur Young's Travels:" "Selwyn's Memoirs."

† Lord C——r, it is given in the letter.

old-fashioned comprehensiveness of the word, with "great politeness."* He was there during the Carnival, which was "jolly—nothing but operas, punchinellos, festinos, and masquerades."

On the fifth of February, "we, that is, *nous autres*, were all dressing out" for a superb entertainment which was to be given by the Princess Francavivalla; and the significance of "*nous autres*" lay in confining it merely to the English, who were to dine with her "exclusive." No wonder he was "happy as a king," and found the "climate heavenly." He discovered "new principles of health" within, and fondly hoped to have added ten years to his life by the journey. In the midst of all this festivity he did not forget those on the other side of the Alps. Three days after the Princess Francavivalla's grand entertainment he wrote to his banker, to desire he would "let Mrs. Sterne have what cash she wants." He explains that he has hardly used any of the letters of credit he had been furnished with, having taken up "no more than about fifty louis at Turin, as much at Rome"—and as he had a plan for travelling home in the quality of "bear leader," he would draw for little more till his return, "so you will always have enough to spare for my wife. The beginning of March, be so kind as to let her have a hundred pounds to begin the year with."

To his "dear girl" he wrote about the same time,

* This is the testimony of the valet, who, however, is again sadly confused in all his dates and localities. He makes him stay but three days in Naples.

as usual affectionately, and yet with a dash of melancholy, which, though the "Princess Francavivalla's" masquerade was coming on, was quite characteristic of Yorick. They had been at Tours (Mrs. and Miss Sterne had their little enjoyments too), and were talking of going to Bourges en Bresse. They had made the acquaintance of a Mr. and Mrs. C——, who had been very kind to them. Miss Sterne had attracted a "little French admirer," and a Marquis de ——, who had introduced himself as an intimate friend of Mr. Sterne's, but who proved to be an impostor. "I desire," wrote the father to his "dear girl," "you will get your mother to write to Mr. C——, that I may discharge every debt; and then, my Lydia, if I live, the produce of my pen shall be yours. If fate reserve me not that, the humane and good, part for thy father's sake, part for thy own, will never abandon thee. If your mother's health will permit her to return to England, your summers I will render as agreeable as I can at Coxwould—your winters at York." The gay and the heartless are not always thus provident of those at a distance.*

His friend Sir James Macdonald had gone with him to Naples, and was in the same house; but was suffering from a dreadful attack of ague or rheumatism, which must have been some local malaria fever. Its remains he took with him on to Rome, where he died in the July of the same year, a few

* It is something to find that Mr. Southey—who was not likely to judge too gently of a character like Sterne's—was struck by these letters from abroad. He owned they refuted the popular notion of neglect and indifference.

weeks after Mr. Sterne left. He was but twenty-five years old; and in an inscription which his friend, Lord Lyttleton wrote for a memorial tablet, and which Boswell read at Skye, it is stated that, notwithstanding the difference of religion at Rome, "such extraordinary honours were paid to his memory as had never graced that of any other British subject since the death of Sir Philip Sidney."

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

MR. STERNE JOURNIES HOME.

Mr. Sterne posted to Rome to be in time for the Holy Week. He was treated there with great distinction. According to La Fleur's recollection, the Pope received him many times, and allowed the Catacombs to be opened for him—an honour, it seems, then accorded only to strangers of distinction. It is said he used to walk alone and read aloud in the Medici gardens. He had the best introductions to the noble families of Doria, Santa Croce, &c. At Rome, too, he sat for one of the fine portrait busts which, like the Reynolds' portrait, seem almost unique for their life and characteristic expression. This was done in terra cotta. But his valet mentions, that while at the Eternal City his pecuniary resources failed him, and he was detained for months waiting for remittances. He was actually reduced to inconvenient straits for want of money, and the "sentimental stranger" used to be pointed at with a sort of pity as he wandered about in deep dejection. It was even insinuated by his valet, that in these difficulties some of the noble families came forward and helped him. The story seems incredible. We see

from his own letters that Panchaud had a correspondent at Rome, the Marquis Belloni (mentioned in Wilkes' letters), a great banker, with whom all the English had their accounts, and upon him Mr. Sterne had letters of credit. No Englishman abroad with friends of distinction, is likely to be refused money at a banker's.

On his first visit he fell in with a "good-hearted young gentleman," a Mr. E——,* whom he had met some three years before, and whom he engaged to lead home as "a bear," through "Venice, Vienna, Saxony, Berlin, and so by the Spaw, and then through Holland to England." This plan could not have been carried out; for, as it will be seen, he came home by the regular Lyons route.

The valet's own testimony at this point seems strangely contradictory. He might have hitherto been astray in his dates, and the order of localities visited, for which the dimness of his recollection might have been a fair excuse; but he told some gentlemen in England, with circumstance, how they *had* travelled home by Vienna, Frankfort, and Brussels, which we have seen is utterly impossible.†

Altogether, he enjoyed his travels; and though he met with a few discomforts and some trifling

* Was this the Mr. Earl, who subscribed for "a royal paper" copy of the "Sentimental Journey?"

† He was asked, too, about the private life and habits of his late master, and all his details have a suspiciously melodramatic air. Mr. Sterne would fall at times into profound fits of melancholy, and would smile at his valet's well-meant efforts to amuse him. At other times he would burst into unreasonable fits of gaiety, and shout "Vive la bagatelle!" He was dreadfully affected by the crowds of destitute and

annoyances, such as "the pistol tinder-box, which was, moreover, filched from me at Sienna, and twice that I payéd five pauls for two hard eggs, once at Ruddi Coffini, and a second time at Capua;" still, "a journey through France and Italy, *provided a man keeps his temper all the way*, is not so bad a thing as *some people would have you believe.*" A sly stroke at the sour chronicle of Doctor Smollett. It had been well for that famous humorist if he had

poor which he encountered everywhere. "These poor people oppress me, La Fleur," he said; "how shall I relieve them?" The starling was a genuine bird—he made him a present to his valet, who brought him over to England. "But I never heard him speak," said La Fleur, sorrowfully; "perhaps he had forgot his note." The hint of the starling, as we have seen, was from Sterne's own crest. The passport La Fleur considered a very grave business, "and M. de Breteuil," said the valet, "with all his Shakespeare, could never have procured it. He was indebted for it to the Marquise de Lambertin." But one little fact stamps his story with grave suspicion. He described Mr. Sterne writing far into the night, and could not understand how he could have printed so very short an account of his travels. "For," says the valet, "upon our return from a tour, we had *a large trunk* completely filled with papers." This is quite inconsistent with Mr. Sterne's habits; and it is a fact, that he did not begin to write a line of his journey until more than a year after he got home. The valet was then asked, "Do you know anything of their tendency, La Fleur?"—"Yes," said he, "*miscellaneous remarks* on the manners of different nations. He was always making elaborate inquiries as to their form of government, &c., and studied a good deal in the libraries of 'the patrons of learning'"—the last field of inquiry in the world Mr. Sterne would have entered on, or would have been inclined to cultivate. The valet shook his head sadly when the grisette was mentioned, and merely remarked "she was very pretty." Still, he added handsomely, that Mr. Sterne's conversation with women was always of the "most interesting" kind—praise which, however, seems a little qualified by the remark, that "he usually left them serious, if he did not find them so." He furnished details about his own personal history; how he had married the elder of two sisters at Montreuil (he had the scene Mr. Sterne sketched from his own window before his eyes), one who rather

got off cheaply with this quiet thrust; but Mr. Sterne was preparing to find room for him in the "Sentimental Journey," and had devised for him the odious sobriquet of Smelfungus. Excellent is the philosophy of travel given as the result of experience. "'Tis nonsense to imagine they will lend you their voitures to be shaken to pieces for nothing; and unless you pay twelve sous for greasing your wheels, how should the poor peasant get butter to his bread? We really expect too much! and for a livre or two above par for your supper and bed, who would embroil their philosophy for it. For Heaven's sake pay it!" Valuable and

"resembled Maria of Moulines;" how she earned only six sous a day by mantua-making—then set up a cabaret for the English sailors; how this failing them through the war, they separated, and she finally disappeared with a company of strolling actors. The whole thing is contradictory and suspicious; and but that it was considered of importance by Sir Walter Scott, scarcely deserved serious notice in Mr. Sterne's life.

On the whole, I believe the true solution to be, that some laquais de place or hotel-waiter, from Calais or elsewhere, who had seen him once or twice, had by some chance come to England; and finding his meagre details profitable and exciting, had gradually enlarged his character as to that of La Fleur, the valet. A glance at the "Sentimental Journey" would have furnished him with hints; or could this be the French valet that Frederick Reynolds picked up at Calais, and took with him on his travels, and whom he insisted should change his name to La Fleur, and whom he addressed as such all through his journey? After their connection was terminated, the Frenchman might have been reluctant to drop the historical name he had grown so accustomed to, and might find his account in not repudiating the glories of Mr. Sterne's original body servant. That "La Fleur" was not the real name of the valet, I have ascertained beyond a doubt. Mr. Sterne found it in a farce of Foote's, acted the very year of his sentimental travels, entitled "The Commissary." He read in the playbill, "La Fleur, a French valet," and appropriated the name for his own follower.

healthful counsel, even in these times, when the "voitures" have been finally shaken to pieces; and there is no greater trial of temper, than a customs examination, and a train lost by a few seconds.

Coming up through France he had laid out a plan to leave his regular course, for the long-promised pleasure of seeing his wife and girl. But he was to have infinite trouble in finding them. They had been changing their place of abode again and again, and he had literally to track them through half-a-dozen towns, receiving news of them at each. He found them at the end, in *Franche Comte*. The meeting after this long absence seems to have been most affectionate. "Poor woman!" said Mr. Sterne, describing it, "she was very cordial, &c." (how Shandean are these "&c.'s.") With his daughter he was delighted, and found her "improved in everything he wished her." But Mrs. Sterne, with her old indiscretion, would not return to England as yet, and was most anxious to stay another year or so. But she remarked a great change in him, and was struck with his look of ill-health, and in fact he left her "most melancholy on that account." A more practical testimony of her anxiety would have been to have returned home with him, and watched over what she was so concerned for.

The point was left open, and Mr. Sterne again struck into the regular road that led up to Paris. But at Dijon he was tempted to turn aside to "a delicious château," belonging to a French Marquis of his acquaintance, which was at that time full of

agreeable company, including seven witty and handsome French ladies. In which pleasant encampment he remained "patriarching it" for a full week. He had not enjoyed himself so much for long. "This is a delicious part of the world: most celestial weather, and we lie all day without damps upon the grass." He was besides, "inspired twice a-day (for her ladyship is not stingy of her wine) with the best Burgundy that grows upon the mountains which terminate our land here."* No wonder with such associations that he felt "unaccountably well, and most accountably nonsensical, and full of boisterous spirits, and felt an irrepressible longing to gallop away at once with his pen. "In faith," he says, exuberantly, writing from this charming plaisaunce, "I think I shall die with it in my hand. But I shall live these ten years, my Antony." A delusive hope, for already his sands were being counted, and the poor gay Shandean had but a year and ten months of life before him.

He tore himself from the château and the seven handsome ladies, intending to post it night and day to Paris; and tarried there only long enough to "wind himself up" to roll on to Calais. He had made a covenant with his Cousin Antony to be home in time to sup with him at Crazy Castle on the King's birthday, and he actually got to Yorkshire before that solemnity came round.

* This sketch recalls a charming picture, extracted by Leigh Hunt from Colonel Pinkney's Travels in France.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

THE LAST SERMON.

He had not been home a fortnight, when he was writing to Paris, to make faithful provision for his wife and daughter. They were at Marseilles, and about to move to Chalons, and Mrs. Sterne had fallen sick. He sent them fifty pounds through Mr. Panchaud. "I have," he writes to him, "such entire confidence in my wife that she spends as little as she can, *tho' she is confined to no particular sum*; her expenses will not exceed three hundred pounds a-year, unless by ill-health or a journey, *and I am very willing she should have it*; and you may rely in case she should draw for fifty or a hundred pounds extraordinary, that it and every demand shall be punctually paid, and with proper thanks; and for this the whole Shandean family are ready to stand security."

Not long after he wrote again, afraid that the banker should not have complied with his wishes.* He was getting uneasy, too, about Mrs. Sterne's state of health, and was actually negotiating a journey to Paris as "bear leader," to a young nobleman (an

* For one of Mr. Sterne's reputed laxity in business matters, he seems to have balanced accounts with his Paris banker with wonderful exactness. He was always a little in advance, but only a little, and was sending over drafts to settle his account with great regularity.

odious office, to which he had special aversion), in order that he might with economy fly over to Avignon. A little later he wrote again, adding thirty guineas more to his original order, for Mrs. Sterne was something worse. "Do write to her," he presses on his banker. The illness was, however, not serious for the present, and in a few weeks she grew better.

But this autumn there came a little provincial excitement to make an agreeable break in his solitude. The young King of Denmark was making a progress through England, and was being received everywhere, as the public journals put it, with "great demonstrations of joy." He was now coming to York. The great races were to be on the eighteenth of August, and he had promised to be present.

That festival was long remembered in York, where the gathering was considered the grandest ever known. Nearly seven hundred persons of distinction subscribed to the ball at the Assembly Rooms. A splendid retinue of nobility escorted the Duke of York. Sunday intervened, and the august party attended service in the Cathedral, where the Danish King was placed in state on the Archbishop's throne. There was a sermon—and that sermon was preached by certainly the most famous preacher of the province—the Reverend Mr. Sterne. He had taken his leave of preaching for ever, as he fancied; but on such an occasion he could scarcely resist. An "excellent discourse," said the London papers. The next day the royal party went to Scarborough, where they visited "Mrs. Donner's Tea Rooms."

He was already at his ninth—and what proved to be the last—volume of Tristram: and had laid out that he would write but one that year. His heart was on a new book, on a new plan—"a work of four volumes,"—for such was the extent he meditated for his "Sentimental Journey." He grew tired of Tristram and his adventures. At the same time, he was writing to his friends his philosophical refrain about happiness being independent of situation, and of each man finding it within himself. But this, it is to be feared, was what he himself would call "no bad rant:" for no one leaned so little on himself, or changed his stage so often in search of comfort, as Yorick.

He worked very hard all the winter at his book, shut up in his solitary parsonage, varying the monotony by a stray letter, written and received. Sometimes a "Crazylite," one of the Stevenson set, would pass by and look in, and him he would charge with a letter for the Castellan. He considered him "as a bank-note in a corner drawer of my bureau. I know it is there—(I wish I did!)" The old Stillington Common cropped up again, and harassed him with what he hated—business: and every moment he had before him the prospect of a rough road and wintry journey through French ice and snows down to Marseilles, where his sick wife was lying.

She, however, grew better; and they determined with the new year to move from Marseilles to a romantic spot near Avignon, a charming place, actually beside the fountain of Vaucluse. Nothing

more delightful could be conceived; and it makes a companion picture to the Toulouse mansion. Mr. Sterne could appreciate the associations of Petrarch and Laura, and envied their residence. It was a marvel of cheapness—seven rooms *en suite*, "half furnished with tapestry, half with blue taffety; the permission to fish and have game; so many partridges a week, &c.; and the price?—guess! sixteen guineas a year!" Well might Mr. Sterne say, "There's for you, Panchaud!"

They were established there by the end of February; and their kind paymaster at home had taken care they should have a hundred louis to enable them to leave Marseilles with credit as soon as the Carnival was over.

The two English ladies must have seen here young Mr. Malone, from Dublin, whose father had just been made an Irish judge. That clever young gentleman did not relish the place, which he found "an old straggling, ugly town." In the society too was a Jacobite tinge—it being recollected that the young Pretender had lived here, and danced at a ball but a few years before, at the time they were hanging his devoted followers in England. Lord Dunbar, Lord Mansfield's brother, was to be seen at various English houses, considered "an agreeable old man;"* and the two English ladies must have fallen in with him.

At this new residence they made a pleasant acquaintance in the Abbé de Sade, an accomplished scholar, who had written a life of Petrarch, and

* Prior's Life of Malone.

who was correcting a French translation of Mr. Sterne's Sermon, made by Miss Lydia Sterne. There they made acquaintances, and found friends —"a Marquis," among others, who was rude to the Abbé de Sade. But it is clear these two ladies had scarcely discretion enough to keep them from embarrassment in a foreign country. The proposals made so frequently for Miss Lydia's hand, show certain attractions in her; but their fruitless issue in all cases show a want of judgment in Mrs. Sterne as to the quality of the suitors she encouraged for her daughter.

Very delightful, as was remarked before, were Mr. Sterne's letters to his daughter at this period— so affectionate, so playful, and so considerate: he seems to alter his tone and style, to become, as it were, her playfellow: he bids her open her heart to him; "to write soon, and write naturally, and then you will write well." She breaks her guitar; and he writes off to Paris: "My daughter begs a present of me, and you know I can deny her nothing. It" —by a characteristic omission, he leaves out the name of the article he wants—"it must be strung with catgut, and of five cords." He sends Mrs. Sterne a fashionable medicine, then largely advertised, "Huxham's Tincture of Bark," a good remedy for the ague. These are not tokens of tremendous weight and significance; yet there is sometimes more delicacy and affection accompanying a small present, and its associations, than in the crude bulk of more costly and substantial tokens. Absence had not sunk him into laziness or indifference.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

OLD BOND STREET.

As usual, Christmas again found him in London; and with the arrival of Mr. Sterne came up too the ninth "Shandy."

He now chose out new lodgings, to which he always came for the future, at number 41, Old Bond Street, a very fashionable quarter; on the west side was a bag-wig makers', and on the first floor of the bag-wig makers', were Mr. Sterne's rooms. As we now walk down that old-fashioned thoroughfare, we may lift our eyes to Mr. Sterne's windows, but the bag-wig maker has passed away with the bag-wigs he made, and a cheesemonger now lets Mr. Sterne's first floor.

Tristram was now passed through the press, and on the 29th of January, 1767, the customary advertisement appeared. But a note appended, showed how keenly relished had been the new-born loves of Captain Shandy. "*** This volume contains the amours of my Uncle Toby." There was but one volume, instead of the favourite number, two; and in that one volume, there was but half the customary number of pages. The price was only two shillings, "sewed." But [illegible] re curious interest attaches to

the little volume, for it was the last of the Shandy series, and, begun abruptly, it stopped short as abruptly, and remains now, like his other works, a mere fragment.

But it came out prefaced by a strange dedication. Six years before he had dedicated his first Tristram instalment to Mr. Pitt, the great patriot Minister. Mr. Pitt was now Lord Chatham, and to this nobleman he inscribed the last portion. It is in a vein of satirical compliment.* "My opinion of Lord —— is neither better nor worse than it was of Mr. ——. Honours, like impressions upon coin, may give an ideal and local value to a bit of base metal, but not to gold and silver." But on the whole it is scarcely in good taste; and if he had the popular aim of dedication in those times in view, it was hardly calculated to rouse the dormant patronage of the great minister.

The Sermons too were at last ready, and were announced on Saturday, January the eighteenth. The old title-page device was still kept up. They were the composition of "Mr. Yorick," but were published by the "Rev. Mr. Sterne." The price was five shillings, "sewed;"† and "*** The nobility and gentry who have honoured Mr. Sterne with their subscriptions," were requested to send

* He has disguised the names under stars. Lord ******* has the right number, but Mr. *** only three, a curious illustration of Mr. Sterne's common failing in spelling.

† "Boards" and "cloth" being as yet unknown, every book came out either in paper covers like French books, or "whole bound in calf." Immediate binding became a necessity. Those who love, like Mr. Shandy, to *bouquiner* among the stalls, will have remarked the legion of little books of this period, all in the one monotonous livery of a brown old calf.

for their copies to the publishers. The author spoke boastfully in his letters of that list of "the nobility and gentry," but scarcely with exaggeration. It was a dazzling show, such as must have made many a garreteer's heart burn with envy. There was to be seen in it every name in the Titled Calendar—dukes, earls, peers in profusion, jostling one another in a disorderly crowd. There was to be seen a cloud of baronets, and a file of names of all that was brilliant and literary. D'Olbach, Crebillon, Diderot, and all his French friends mustered round him thickly; that now half French Hume, whom he threatened to call deist if he did not subscribe; and gentlemen of the army. Ladies, such as "Mrs. Grosvenor and Miss Eliza Grosvenor," were very strong in numbers. On the roll we read the names of Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Ed. Montagu (Lady Mary's son), Mr. Reynolds, Leicester Fields (curiously the only one whose address is given), many Pitts, Thomas Townshend, "Walpole, Esquire," and, walking last in the procession, the sardonic-looking name, M. de Voltaire. (How did he secure him?) Gentlemen of the gown mustered in crowds; and among them Mr. Sterne saw the name of the Rev. Dr. Leigh, who was vicar of Halifax when he was at the Free School. Here was grave warning and serious reproof from a moral age!

From Bond Street he wrote to Panchaud, advising him of a hundred guineas paid into Mr. Selwin's hands for the use of Mrs. Sterne.* He

* This letter, dated Feb. 28, and not published, is curiously like one

was full of his book, and anxious that the banker should get him "the honour of a few names of men of science and fashion. 'Tis subscribed for at a great rate." A fortnight later he wrote again, anxious that Mrs. Sterne should have her hundred pounds. They had just written over an agreeable piece of news. A Marseilles gentleman, worth twenty thousand livres a-year, "and much at his ease," had "offered" for Miss Sterne; and Mr. Sterne wrote gaily to his friends that he supposed "Mademoiselle, with Madame ma Femme, will negotiate the affair." Nothing more, however, was heard of the French monsieur who was so "very much at his ease." Most likely he fancied Miss Sterne to be equally very much at her ease; and so, like many others of the lady's proposals, it came to nothing. Mr. Sterne, when details were forwarded to him, interpreted his attentions with the eyes of a man of the world. "As to Mr. ——," he wrote, in a postscript to Miss Lydia, "by your description he is a fat fool; I beg you will not give up your time to such a being."

Yet he could write, with a charming gaiety, pleasant light letters down to the ladies at Newburgh; letters addressed, indeed, to his friend, Lord Fauconberg, but stored with London gossip for their amusement. These little "gazettes" unfold the old story of the dinners with the "Duke of York's people," the concerts, and the first of Mrs. Cornely's

in the printed collection,—indeed is word for word in many sentences. In this last letter he calls Mr. Selwin "Mr. Selvey," and talks of "Merseilles." He also adds, how he expected to make a thousand guineas of his new book. Most likely he thought the first had miscarried.

Soho assemblies. He had also found his way to the acquaintance of the wild Lord March, afterwards "old Q." These characteristic epistles will be welcome at full length.*

"London, Friday.

"My Lord,

"When we got up yesterday morning, the streets were 4 inches deep in snow—it has set in now with the most intense cold. I could scarse lay in bed for it, and this morning more snow again. Tho' the roads after all are extreamly good near town, and, I suppose, every where else, the snow has been very deep in Kent.

"No news. I dined yesterday with Lord Marsh and a large company of the duke of York's people, &c., and came away just as wise as I went. The King at Cimon, the new opera last night—nobody at Covent Garden but the citizens' children and apprentices. The Duke of York was to have had a play house of his own, and had studied his part in the Fair Penitent, and made Garrick act it twice on purpose to profit by it; but the King, 'tis said, has desired the Duke to give up the part and the project with it.

"☞ (all this is for the Ladies) to whom, w^th^ all comp^s^ to the party at Quadrille and Lady Catherine.

"I am, my Lord,

"Y^r^ most unworthy Gazetteere that ever wrote,

"but most faithfully y^r^ ever obliged,

"L. Sterne."

* The originals are at Newburgh, and I am allowed to use them by the kindness of Sir George Wombwell.

"Bond Street, Jan. 16th, 1767.

"My Lord,

"There is a dead stagnation of everything, and scarse any talk but about the damages done over the Kingdom by this cruel storm; it began yesterday morning to thaw gently, and has continued going on so till now. I hope it will all get away after the same manner. It was so intensely cold on Sunday, that there were few either at the church or court, but last night it thaw'd; the concert at Soho top full—and was (this is for the ladies) the best assembly and the best concert I ever had the honour to be at. Lady Anne had the goodness to challenge me, or I had not known her, she was so prudently muffled up; Lord Bellasyse, I never saw him look so well; Lady Bellasyse recovers *à marvielle*—and y^r^ little niece I believe grows like flax.

"We had reports yesterday that the York stage coach w^th^ 14 people in and about it, were drown'd by mistaking a bridge—it was contradicted at night—as are half the morning reports in town.

"The *School for Guardians* (wrote by Murphy) scarse got thro' the 1st night—'tis a most miserable affair—Garrick's Cimon fills his house brim full every night.

"The streets are dirtier than in the town of Coxwould—for they are up to the knees, except on the *trottoire*.

"I beg my best comp^s^, my Lord, to Mrs. Bellasyse the Ladies——, and to S^r^ Bryan Stapleton, and am

"With unfeigned attachm^ts^, y^r^ l^d^p^'s^ faithful,

"L. Sterne."

The thoughtless clergyman was, however, to be troubled with many rude correctives; though he affected to "laugh loudly" at all such protests, he still felt them secretly. To the end of his life he was to be spoken of rudely and with a coarse freedom, in the public journals. It has been mentioned how one of the curious effects of the popularity of "Tristram" was, that it should have become a young ladies' book, and been hidden away in young ladies' pockets; and this feature grew so developed as to be noticed in many contemporary papers and magazines. But it was to receive a yet more curious confirmation. On the morning of Monday, March the 30th, there appeared in the *Public Ledger* a letter, signed "Davus," full of the old scandal and the old complaints; and on the same day some well-meaning persons, struck by the justness of these strictures, sent down from London an anonymous letter, addressed to Mr. Sterne's archbishop. With all his failings, he might contend against, or, at least, affect to despise, open attack; but it was hard to struggle against assailants in the dark. Happily it seems to have met with the reception such unaccredited strokes should always meet; for it does not appear to have injured him with his superior.*

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE:—

"Several well wishers to your Grace, and to religion and the cause of virtue, modesty, and decency, think it a duty incumbent on them, consistently with that regard they have for them, as well as

* This letter was found among the Archbishop's papers.

order and right conduct, to refer your Grace to a letter, signed *Davus*, in the '*Public Ledger*' *of this day*, very justly, as they humbly think, animadverting on the scandal they have long taken and oftener conceived at the works of 'Tristram Shandy,' as written by a *clergyman* and a *dignified* one, uncensured by his superiors. They harbour no malice or private peek against him, having no personal knowledge of him or view by this; but are moved merely by indignation on seeing the above letter, and doubt not, from your Grace's well-known goodness, piety, love of order and decency, but it will have the same effect on you; and as it is apprehended this gentleman is within your *province* to censure, it is not doubted but such means will be used as shall deter this wanton scandal to his cloth, from proceeding in this lewd ludicrous manner, as he has long done, to the shame and disgrace of his sacred order, and the detriment of society; of which, surely many fathers and mothers can testify, whose daughters have not thereby been mended, but most probably corrupted, of which there may be given instances. No conduct, therefore, surely more deserves a censure. But whether private or public, your Grace is best judge of. The former probably has been bestowed in vain; and the latter may have a bad effect, by increasing curiosity; yet, perhaps somewhat more than frowns or contempt should be done, that such scandal should no longer exist, or religion and the clergy will be no gainers by it. "Your Grace's well wishers,

"Monday, 30th March, 1767." "SEVERAL."

We now approach a most curious passage in Mr. Sterne's curious life—one, too, that requires delicate touching. It is undoubtedly the most questionable of his many weaknesses; and if in some instances of the same class, he has been dealt with too harshly, in this he has laid himself open to the gravest censure. The most indulgent construction of this Draper episode, exhibits a frantic attachment unbecoming in one who was already a husband and a father; so suspicious, too, in its circumstances, as to require a confidence almost chivalrous to exculpate him. Still there is something to be said in extenuation, some strange facts, which it is difficult to reconcile with a harsh view of this singular episode, and to the benefit of these he is fairly entitled. They seem to me to have some weight.

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

YORICK AND ELIZA.

THE French, as might be expected, have seized on this bit of romance with something like rapture. The loves of Yorick and Eliza were as eagerly devoured as those of the unhappy Werther and his Charlotte. They breathed true "sentiment," and were very welcome. The nation who has turned over the "Dame aux Camélias," of the younger Crebillon of our day, is not likely to sacrifice what seems a good wicked episode, to strict truth. Yet it is refreshing to find a brilliant writer like M. Janin, with whom dramatic effect must be precious, taking the more charitable view of the affair. And it is remarkable that the contemporary criticisms, and notably the *Monthly Review*, a journal always hostile to Sterne, inclined to the opinion, that the whole bore an innocent complexion, and that this was but the affection of an elderly clergyman for an admiring pupil.

At Anjinga, an English factory, on the Malabar coast, not very far from Calicut, was born the lady whom her acquaintance with Mr. Sterne has made so famous. Her parents were English, and had come out to Anjinga (a musically sounding name),

most likely in some connection with English trade. We can fix the year of her birth with something like precision, as about the year seventeen hundred and forty-three: for she was thirty-five years old when she died, and her death took place in the year 1778.

She grew up into a very attractive girl, being particularly distinguished by a strange air of Eastern languor, which she owed to the circumstance of her being born under an Indian sun. She was presently seen by "Daniel Draper, Esq., Counsellor at Bombay," who married her. There can be no question but that this gentleman was a connection of the more famous Sir William Draper —the Junius Sir William Draper—who about the time the other was "Counsellor of Bombay," was fighting in that very quarter of India as Colonel Draper.

It is well known that children of European parents who happen to be born in India rarely grow up in that trying climate, and are usually sent home at an early age, to be brought up in their parents' native country. This may account for Mrs. Draper's extraordinary delicacy and wretched health, which determined "Daniel Draper, Esq.," with more affection than prudence, to send her to Europe with her children. Interest for these latter too may have had some share in the plan. What was the particular year in which she visited England is quite uncertain; but it would seem to have been towards the end of 1766, the year when Mr. Sterne was on his sentimental travels.

He had just finished his ninth "Shandy," and had come up for his regular Christmas visit in the December of that year. In his usual hurried march from drawing-room to drawing-room he met the Indian lady—by an accident, it is said. He was not in the least struck by her appearance. He saw only "a very plain woman," pale, sickly, in miserable health; and made even more unpleasing by some exaggerated folly of dress, which was then in fashion. His first feeling was pure compassion for the sickly Indian lady; but presently, when she began to speak, he was struck by the intelligence and animation and "goodness" of her countenance—by a something in her voice and eyes singularly persuasive, and a "bewitching sort of nameless excellence." The shape of her face was, to Mr. Sterne's artistic eye, "the most perfect oval" he ever saw. She seems to have possessed a singular "sweetness" of expression; and Raynal, one of her most fervent admirers, dwells upon what he calls that "*accord presque incompatible de volupté et de décence qui accompagnoit toute sa personne, et qui se mêloit à tous ses mouvemens.*"

Such is the portrait of the famous Eliza. Hers being the charms that would be appreciated "only by men of nice sensibility," it was not surprising that Mr. Sterne, for the fiftieth time in his life, should have been fascinated: "nor ever was there, nor will there be, that man of sense, tenderness, and feeling, in your company three hours, that was not, or will not be, your admirer and *friend* in consequence of it."

When Mr. Sterne was writing his Sentimental Journey, his mind was full of this Eliza; and it seems more than probable that the portrait of the charming lady he met at Calais, was drawn from the Indian lady. In age and character it exactly corresponds with Raynal's and Mr. Sterne's own sketches. "It was a face of about six and twenty, of a clear transparent brown, simply set off without rouge or powder. It was not critically handsome; but there was that in it which attached me much more to it—it was interesting . . . . . a thousand other distresses might have traced the same lines. I wished to know what they had been; and was ready to inquire."

The Indian lady had Indian friends in London, who lived in Gerrard Street. These were Commodore James, and his wife; the former an officer of some distinction, who had served in many adventurous expeditions on the Indian coast, where sailors had to be as much soldiers as sailors; and whose deeds are fully described by the historian, Orme. In that work, which at that time was just published, the name of Commodore James occurs frequently. They seem to have been kind, excellent, hospitable persons, and warm friends both of Mr. Sterne and of Mrs. Draper; and at their house in Gerrard Street, it seems more than probable, Yorick first met Eliza. He was to become later Sir William James, and chairman of the East India Company; and the only little fact of his London life that I can discover, shows him befriending the unfortunate Colonel Frederick, who

was son to the famous adventurer, Theodore, King of Corsica, and calling a private meeting of friends at Gerrard Street, to raise a subscription for his benefit. He seems to have been a brave soldier and a kindly friend.*

As usual, and following out his principle of ever having some Dulcinea in his head, Mr. Sterne gave full reins to his sentimental passion. As with the Paris lady, he "deliciously cantered away with it, always upon my hanches along the street." He followed it out in many tender phases, with his usual thoughtless, reckless fashion. The public, the ostentatious way in which he brought this grand passion and its incidents before all his friends—before the sober and correct, as well as the more free—and even before the public, shows plainly that he considered himself a privileged sentimentalist. More questionable affairs are not thrust thus into the light of day. By-and-by Mr. Sterne was inviting all the world to listen to the sorrows of his sentimental passion. As it was, London society began to talk; and an officious but well-meaning person, flush of English news, passing by Marseilles, where

* In the "Annual Necrology" for 1797-8, a book full of curious detail—a little trait about Sir William James is given. "Colonel Frederick once told the writer of this, with great good humour, that having paid a visit to Sir William James, in Gerrard Street, the footmen mistook his regimentals, on account of their colour and long epaulettes, for a livery. He, in consequence of this, could get no further than the hall, until introduced by the baronet in person, who made many apologies for the blunder of his domestics."—P. 337. Sir William married a Miss Goddard, of a good Wiltshire family—got into parliament ten years after Sterne's death—and died of a fit of apoplexy in 1783, on the morning of his daughter's marriage.

were Mrs. Sterne and her daughter, had the cruelty and bad taste to inform them of the new scandal that was then amusing London.

The sick lady had the spirit to reply "that she wished not to be informed, and urged that he would drop the subject." The young girl herself wrote to her father how uneasy her mother was on the subject. The subject was indeed unsuitable for one of her years. But this was one of the painful complications into which her father's follies led him. He wrote back to her that he honoured Mrs. Sterne for her answer; and then—to his own child—entered on a sort of justification of himself. "'Tis true I have a friendship for her; but not to infatuation.—I believe I have judgment enough to discern hers and every woman's 'faults.'" He then heartily wishes "he had her with him to introduce her to his friends, the James's," whose portraits he sketches for her. He "is as worthy a man as I ever met. He possesses every manly virtue—honour and bravery are his characteristics, which have distinguished him nobly in several instances." Mrs. James "is the most amiable and gentlest of beings," and "of so sweet a disposition that she is too good for the world. Just God!" adds Mr. Sterne, "if *all were like her!* Heaven, my Lydia, for some wise purpose, has created different beings." An allusion there is no mistaking.

Mrs. James knew every incident of this attachment, and seems to have accepted it as perfectly harmless, and as a sort of extravagant friendship. Mr. Sterne used to repair to Gerrard Street and sit there for hours talking over the merits of their friend. Mrs.

Draper had sat for three pictures—one for Mrs. James, one for a family friend also, who lived in the City, and one for Mr. Sterne.

Mrs. James's portrait was a sort of theatrical performance, and represented Eliza decked out in silks, pearls, and ermine. Mr. Sterne did not relish it, and insisted that when she came to sit for *his* picture, she was to be dressed simply, and like "a vestal." The one for the City family was a stiff and constrained performance, representing "a conceited, made-up coquette," for which Mr. Sterne "would not give ninepence." In return for hers, Mr. Sterne presented his own.

The name of the City people has unfortunately been suppressed. They were friends of Eliza's, and of the James's, but not of Mr. Sterne's. They had considerately cautioned her against the dangers of this increasing intimacy, and, as is usual with such remonstrances, they were reported to the person against whom they were directed. He never forgave this interference; it inflamed him with the bitterest rancour. It does indeed seem reasonable to suppose that the remonstrances were well intended; at the same time, we are not to exclude, another possible cause, namely, that of dislike to Mr. Sterne himself. Whatever was the reason, this resentment made Mr. Sterne descend to an unworthy retaliation, wholly unwarrantable, which shall be dealt with presently.

Another of the coterie in Gerrard Street was an American young gentleman, who, though not more than five or six-and-twenty years old, had already

shown a brilliancy that attracted public attention. Newspaper readers were asking who was the sturdy upholder of national rights on the American side of the great stamp question, and who signed himself *Junius Americanus*. This was Arthur Lee, who, a few years later, was called to the English Bar, a profession he afterwards abandoned to become more conspicuous in the councils of his native country. This young man was now the friend of Mr. Sterne, and one of the party who met in Gerrard Street and took interest in "the Bramine" —a name Mr. Sterne had coined for her, obviously suggesting her country; and he furnished himself with another—THE BRAMIN—no less appropriately suggested to him by his own profession. This was a bit of sentimental elaboration which, indeed, speaks something for the harmlessness of the whole proceeding: for he was keeping before his eyes, as he almost acknowledged, the more famous model Swift, and the fond vocabulary of Presto and Stella.

Meanwhile, "Daniel Draper, Esq.," far off at Bombay, began to be anxious that his wife should return, and wrote, requiring her departure. This was scarcely unreasonable; but rumours reached Mr. Sterne that he was of a penurious turn, and was apprehensive that Mrs. Draper might be incurring expenses which he might have to discharge. It is certain no reports about her proceedings could have reached him; but Mrs. Draper herself used to enlarge warmly on his merits to Mr. Sterne, and extolled him as "a generous, humane man."

Trifling as this little fact is, it should have some weight in the delicate balancing of the case.

She at once prepared to obey. Her European residence does not seem to have benefited her health in the least; and at this time she was seriously ill. She was suffering from a sort of low fever, pain in her side, and utter prostration. In appearance she must have been a perfect wreck; as, indeed, Mr. Sterne did not scruple to hint to her. "May the roses come quick back to thy cheek, and the rubies to thy lips! but trust my declaration, Eliza, that thy husband (if he is the good feeling man I wish him) will press thee to him with more honest warmth and affection, and kiss thy *pale, poor dejected face* with more transport than he would be able to do in the best bloom of thy beauty." She was really ill, but prepared at once for her voyage. She was to leave her children behind, and her passage was taken in the "Earl of Chatham" Indiaman, which was to sail about the beginning of April.

Mr. Sterne and his friends, the James's, were much distressed at the notion of parting. He made her a present of all his works—his Sermons and his "Tristram." He accompanied the gift with a curious acknowledgment, of some value in a literary point of view; namely, that the "sermons came all hot from the heart—the *others came from the head*," which would, indeed, seem true of the later "Shandys," produced so fitfully and laboriously—as it were to order.

The day of departure came at last, and she had to go down to Deal, off which coast the "Earl of

Chatham," Indiaman, was lying, to wait until the signal for embarkation should be given. Mr. Sterne then began to write those famous love-letters which have been translated into nearly every European language; and continued to write them until the "Earl of Chatham" weighed anchor and stood out to sea.

While she was staying at Deal, Mr. Sterne wrote her a sketch of a famous character which seems a perfect *carte de visite* of a figure belonging to the Augustan age of English letters. Old Lord Bathurst who, after the Swifts, Addisons, and Steeles, had dropped away, had lingered until he found the strange faces of a new generation about him—was still to be seen in London drawing-rooms, "a prodigy! for at eighty-five he has all the wit and promptness of a man of thirty—a disposition to be pleased, and a power to please others—added to which, a man of learning, courtesy, and feeling." With him was the name of Eliza to be associated—and lifted into a fine classical atmosphere.

On an occasion when Mr. Sterne was at the Prince of Wales's levée, this ancient nobleman came up and introduced himself. "I want to know you, Mr. Sterne," he said; "but it is fit you should also know who it is who wishes this pleasure. You have heard," continued he, "of that old Lord Bathurst, of whom your Popes and Swifts have sung and spoken so much. I have lived my life with geniuses of that cast, but have survived them; and *despairing ever to find their equals*—'tis some years I closed my accounts and shut up my books

. . . . *but you have kindled a desire in me* to open them once more before I die, which I now do —so go home and dine with me."

It was hard to resist this compliment: so Mr. Sterne went home and dined with the patriarchal Mæcenas. There was only one other guest of the party, and he "a person of sensibility"— and finding himself in a congenial atmosphere —and on a hint, perhaps, of the old Lord's, as to the loves of the Unfortunate lady and Mr. Pope, or an allusion to Stella and Dr. Swift— Mr. Sterne gave them the whole story of the unhappy Indian who was about to embark. He dwelt on her more than an hour, and with such effect as to interest the whole party. The "good old Lord" toasted her three times, and said he hoped to live long enough not only to know her, but to see her "eclipse all other Nabobesses as much in wealth as she already does in exterior." And a "most sentimental afternoon till nine o'clock have we passed."

Mrs. Draper, still sadly dejected, was now writing them details about the ship and her fellow-passengers. There was a Miss Light going with her,—a lady who afterwards married "George Stratton, Esquire." She was taking out her piano-forte and a guitar; and Mr. Sterne, a known musician himself, went to Zumpe's, a maker of the period, and obtained some directions from him in reference to the tuning of both instruments. Down at York, the Rev. Mr. Mason had a "Zumpe" also, which he lent to Gray, and the high notes of which

were "somewhat dry and sticky." This instrument Mr. Sterne must have seen. He got her a hammer and pliers "to twist your wire with, and may every one of them, my dear, vibrate sweet comfort to thy hopes." He also got her "ten handsome brass screws "to hang your necessaries upon." There were twelve originally, but he stole a couple from "you to put up in my own cabin at Coxwould. I shall never hang or take my hat off one of them but I shall think of you." He also wrote "Mr. Abraham Walker, pilot at Deal," to receive all those articles on the arrival of the Deal machine, and bid him look out for a serviceable arm-chair in that town, and send it on board.

He continues to write steadily every day—sometimes in a strain of simplicity that provokes a smile, and suggests the mixture of sentiment and "bread and butter" in Goethe's Charlotte. Thus he dwells at length on the painting of her cabin. "O! I grieve for your cabin; and fresh painting will be enough to destroy every nerve about thee. Take care of yourself, my dear girl, and sleep not in it too soon; 'twill be enough to give you a stroke of epilepsy." And later he asks, "Why may not clean washing and rubbing do?"

He promised to write every post until she finally set sail. He bids her put all his letters "into some order." The first eight or nine were numbered,* but the rest she will be able to arrange "by the day or hour which, *I hope*, I have generally prefixed."

* There are only, properly speaking, four given previous to this letter, so a good many must have been lost.

This cautious assumption, "I hope," was but prudent, for there are actually no dates of any description affixed to the letters. "When they were got together," he continues, "in chronological order, sew them together under a cover. I trust they will be a perpetual refuge to thee from time to time, and that thou wilt (when weary of fools and uninteresting discourse) retire and converse an hour with them and me."

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

THE "EARL OF CHATHAM" SAILS.

It was coming close to the time of sailing. If contrary winds continued to detain the ship, it had been arranged that he and Mr. James should go down to Deal to see her.

Among the passengers, too, were to be "a young soldier," whom Mrs. Draper described as "susceptible of tender impressions." Mr. Sterne would seem to have been uneasy on the score of this "young soldier," and was disturbed by the way his approaches were received: though he admits "there was no shutting the door against him either in politeness or humanity." In a sort of apologetic fashion, Eliza had hinted that "before Miss Light has sailed a fortnight, he will be in love with her." "But," says Mr. Sterne, "five months with Eliza, and in the same room, and with an amorous son of Mars!" And then thinking of some negro character at the Theatre, adds, "It *can no be Masser*."* "But thy discretion, thy wisdom, thy honour—the spirit of thy honour."

Waiting off Deal for a favourable wind, the

* "The Padlock," where Mungo talks in this fashion, was not acted until the following year.

unhappy Bramine's sickness and prostration seem to have increased. She was indeed but ill suited to undertake such a voyage. She wrote again to Mr. Sterne, who received the letter as he was going to dine in Gerrard Street. He took it with him, and sat down to answer it whilst Mr. James "was dressing, and the dear girl his wife is writing beside me." The whole evening they talked dismally over their friend, now tossing down at Deal. In the letter she had mentioned those City friends who had written "tender things" to her; and Mr. Sterne, sitting in Gerrard Street, was greatly inflamed by the mention of the name, and burst out into a bitter tirade against them. It seems unaccountable this animosity against them, considering that she was not likely to see them again.

"The * * *, by Heaven, are worthless. I have heard enough to tremble at the articulation of the name. How could you, Eliza, leave them (or suffer them to leave you, rather), with impressions the least favourable. *I have told thee enough to plant* disgust against their treachery to thee to the last hour of thy life: yet still thou toldest Mrs. James at last that thou believest they affectionately loved thee." He adds, that Mrs. James's "delicacy," and wish to spare Mrs. Draper pain, also prevented her giving "more" glaring proofs of their baseness. "For God's sake, write not to them, nor foul thy fair characters with such polluted hearts. They love thee! What proof! . . . . Is it . . . their zeal *for those attachments, which do thee honour, and make thee happy.* . . . No, but they weep

and say tender things. Adieu to all such for ever. Mrs. James's honest heart revolts against the idea of even returning them one visit."

In a later letter he returns to the subject again; and speaking of the picture which had been done for this obnoxious family, he says he considered her expression to have been inspired "by the affected leer of the one and strange appearance of the other." He added, that their pertinacity was insufferable. They had just sent a card "they would wait on Mrs. James on Friday. She sent back she was engaged. Then to meet at Ranelagh to-night: she answered she did not go. She says, if she allows the least footing, she never shall get rid of their acquaintance, which she is resolved to drop at once. She knows them: she knows they are not her friends or yours, and the first use they would make of being with her, would be to sacrifice you to her, if they could a second time. *She begs I will reiterate my request to you that you will not write to them*— 'twill give her and thy Bramin, too, inexpressible pain."

It is painful to be obliged to own that the entire of this message from Mrs. James was a pure fiction; a shabby untruth, into which his own private animosity, or his partiality for Mrs. Draper, betrayed him. It was an artifice, too, which it is plain he thought quite venial; for, with a strange confidence, he told the whole to the young American Arthur Lee, who was later pressing to be introduced to these very mysterious * * * 's. Mr. Sterne was no hypocrite, and did not pretend

to conceal his dislikes. "I cannot forgive you, Lee," he wrote to him, "for your folly in saying you intend to get introduced to the ——s. I despise them, and I shall hold you undoubtedly much cheaper than I now do, if you persist. They are bitter enemies of mine, but I am even with them. La Bramine assured me, they used their endeavours with her to break off her friendship with me, for reasons I will not write, but tell you . . . . . Strange infatuation! but I think I have effected my purpose by a falsity which Yorick's friendship to the Bramine can only justify. I wrote her word that the most amiable of women reiterated my request that she would not write to them. I said, too, she had concealed many things for the sake of her peace of mind, when in fact, Lee, this was merely a child of my own brain, made Mrs. James's by adoption, to enforce *the argument I had before urged so strongly.* Do not mention this circumstance to Mrs. James, 'twould displease her, and *I had no design in it, but for the Bramine to be a friend to herself.*" There is an unpleasant flavour about this transaction, and it leaves behind on the moral palate a disagreeable taste. It cannot in any degree be excused. It seems, too, an ungentlemanly artifice; and though that moral dulness which made him look on it as a mere innocent deception, be some slight extenuation, still this was but the fruit of that companionship with the loose pioneers of the revolution, the Crebillons, and Raynals, and of that "playing the good-fellow with Lord Granby & Co."

As the day for sailing drew near, Mrs. Draper's illness increased, and her friends became alarmed. Mr. Sterne pressed upon her the necessity of putting off her voyage; he was sure her husband, when he knew the true state of the case, could not object. Her physician, had indeed ordered her "the pure Southern air of France, or milder Naples;" so that the country to which she was hurrying was scarcely a suitable residence. But there was a "Mr. B——" standing by—an Indian, it is to be presumed—who seems to have drawn a not very encouraging picture of Mr. Draper's impatience. Mr. Sterne was afraid that this gentleman "had exaggerated matters." He did not like his face, "it is absolutely killing; should evil befall thee, what will he have not to answer for." He again pressed her to delay her journey. "If thou art so very ill, put off all thoughts of returning to India this year; write to your husband; tell him the truth of your case. *If he is the generous humane man you describe him to be,* he cannot but applaud your conduct."

Speaking of her cabin friends, who he is afraid "are only genteel by comparison with the contrasted crew with which she must behold them," he returns again to the obnoxious City people. "So was you know who, from the same fallacy that was put upon the judgment——but I will not mortify you." It has been assumed that this was a sneer at "Daniel Draper, Esq., Councillor at Bombay," and who was so much respected "in that quarter of the globe." But this is not consistent with "the

generous humane man," which was his wife's description of him; nor with the respectful way Mr. Sterne always spoke of him. Nor would it be as "a fallacy upon the judgment," that so serious a thing as an ill-assorted marriage would be alluded to. Nor again, would the mere allusion to the subject be "a mortification." In the last letter but one, he had been alluding to that "strange infatuation," that fallacy of the judgment which made her so pertinaciously adhere to the * * * 's. Her eyes were now opened, and he would not "mortify her" by further allusion to the matter.* Presently Mr. Sterne was writing to her that he thought she had as many virtues as my Uncle Toby's widow, and on that text is betrayed into another fatal burst. "Talking of widows, pray, Eliza, if ever you are such, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy nabob, because I design to marry you myself. My wife cannot live long; she has sold all the provinces in France already, and I know not the woman I should like so well for her substitute as yourself."

If this was a serious proposal, it was cruel and unwarrantable; if merely a sort of jesting speculation, it was still unfeeling, and scarcely in good taste. Neither of the alternatives is very encouraging; yet of the two, the last is certainly the most venial; and I am inclined to believe that in this latter sense it was intended. This will be

* There is no attempt at forcing a meaning here. Any one who calmly reads over these letters, will see for himself that this is what was in Mr. Sterne's mind.

apparent when we mark how Mr. Sterne follows up his proposition.

"'Tis true *I am ninety-five in constitution*, and you but twenty-five—rather too great a disparity this! but what I want in youth I will make up in wit and good humour. Not Swift so loved his Stella, Scarron his Maintenon, or Waller his Sacharissa, as I will love and sing thee, my wife elect. All these names, eminent as they were, shall give place to thine, Eliza.

"Tell me in answer to this that you approve and honour the proposal; and that you would (like the Spectator's mistress) have more joy in putting on an old man's slipper, than in associating with the gay, the voluptuous, and the young.

"Adieu! my Simplicia.

"Yours,

"TRISTRAM."

Even this signature—it is the only letter thus signed—shows a certain sportiveness in the tone of the whole; and he leads off his proposal with a certain jocularity, calling her "hussey." In fact, however we may construe his reference to his wife, this passage appears to furnish a key to the relations on which this intimacy was based. Mr. Sterne had before his eyes the models of the eminent persons he enumerates, as we have before ours the later instances of Goethe, and the picture given by Mrs. Thrale of Doctor Collier and Miss Streatfield. It was soothing to his vanity, that now, not very far removed from sixty, he was capable of inspiring such an attachment; and the

notion of "the old man's slipper," showed that he accepted it very much in that light. Just to show that the whole attachment had this quasi-paternal tone, I will pick a few passages from various portions of the correspondence.

"Write to me, *my child*, only such: let them speak the easy cheerfulness of a heart that opens itself anyhow and everyhow *to a man you ought to esteem and trust.*" His letters contain "something better, and what you may feel more suited to your situation—*a long detail of much advice, truth, and knowledge.*" Pressing her to put off the departure, "*you owe much, I allow, to your husband;* you owe something to appearances and the opinion of the world." Even their last interview seems to have been of this character; "and when I talk to Lydia, the words of Esau, as uttered by thee, perpetually ring in my ears. '*Bless me, even me also, O my father.*'"

More pointed still is the allusion in the account of his dream. He dreamed that she came into his room with "a shawl" in her hand, and told him that his spirit had flown to her to the Downs; and that she had come *to administer* what *consolation filial affection* could bestow, and to receive his parting breath *and blessing*. He laid out a plan for the restoration of her health. "I will send for my wife and daughter; and they shall carry you in the pursuit of health to Montpellier," &c. He closes one of his letters with, "I am all that honour and inclination can make me, THY BRAHMIN."

The advice he gives her, and his allusion to

sacred duties, would be utterly inexplicable on the harsher view of his intimacy.

"I probably shall never see you more; yet flatter myself you will sometimes think of me with pleasure, because you must be convinced I love you; *and so interest myself in your rectitude, that I had rather hear of any evil befalling you, than any want of reverence for yourself.*" Later he says, "I will live for thee and for my Lydia: be rich for the dear children of my heart; gain wisdom, gain fame and happiness, to share them with thee and her in my old age." He makes these assertions "in the presence of a just God." He gives her this counsel: "May the God of kindness be kind to, and approve himself thy protector; and for thy daily comfort bear in mind this truth, that whatever measure of sorrow and dulness is thy portion, it will be repaid to thee in full measure of happiness, by the Being thou hast wisely chosen for *thy eternal friend.*"

He concludes one of his last letters in this way: "What can I add more in the agitation of mind I am in, and within five minutes of the last postman's bell, *but recommend thee to Heaven, and recommend myself to Him with thee,* in the same fervent ejaculation? That we may be happy and meet again—if not *in this world, in the next.*"

He must have been the most daringly impious of men to have ventured on these appeals, unless he knew that his heart was tolerably pure. In the worst view that has been taken of him, this reckless insolence of impiety has never yet been imputed to him. His last words to her were of the same

character, "Adieu! adieu! and with my adieus let me give thee one straight rule of conduct that thou hast *heard from my lips in a thousand forms, but I concentre it in one word:* Reverence thyself. I shall probably never see you more!" This he must have known was the probability, as indeed it proved the certainty. About this time he was being visited with forebodings of his own approaching end, and those fatal consumptive tokens which had clung to him now for so many years, and were becoming more prominent every day, must have been significant warnings. Mrs. Draper, too, was in miserable health, and scarcely seemed likely to survive the voyage. What serious meaning, then, ought to be attached to such idle dreamy speculations as "talking of widows, pray, Eliza, *if ever* you are such, do not think of giving yourself to some wealthy nabob," &c.?

A voyage to India, too, at this date was a serious undertaking, very costly and tedious. A furlough to Europe was a rare pleasure, and the mere travelling home and out again in the lumbering Indiamen of the day, covered a serious span of human life. When therefore was Mrs. Draper to think of visiting England and seeing Yorick again? and this improbability of ever meeting, does, to a certain degree, account for the exaggerated and extravagant tone of those letters.

On the eve of the sailing of the *Earl of Chatham,* Mr. Sterne was attacked by his old enemy, and ten minutes after he sent off his letter, the poor fine-spun frame of Yorick gave way. He

broke a vessel in the chest, and could not stop the blood until four in the morning. He was better, however, before noon. "My bleeding," he wrote, "is quite stopped, and I feel the principle of life strong within me; so be not alarmed Eliza; I know I shall do well." Then he concludes, "And so this is the last letter thou art to receive from me, because the *Earl of Chatham* (I read in the papers), is got to the Downs, and the wind I find is fair; if so, blessed woman, take my last, last farewell." Almost his last word is a promise to take care of her children, and he bids her have no anxiety about them.

A plain prosaic newspaper scrap—an extract from the shipping news of the day, contains the last scene in this little history:—"*Deal, April* 3, wind N.E., came down and sailed with his majesty's ship *Tweed, Merlin* sloop, and all the outward-bound, the *Lord Chatham* East Indiaman, *Susannah Hays,* for Cadiz, and *Beaver Hamstrom,* for Venice."

These are the facts—facts put, it is hoped, without distortion—which may be taken into account when considering the true character of this curious episode. That there should be grave doubts on the matter is Sterne's own fault, and Sterne's own folly. No man with a rash temerity is privileged to rush into an equivocal situation, and then, conscious of innocence, defy the ordinary presumptions by which conduct is to be tried. The world has but one scale for weighing guilt and innocence. If he voluntarily take on himself the common

ncidents of crime, and walk fearlessly into a cloud of suspicion, he cannot complain if he be dealt with according to the ordinary rules of evidence. He must accept the severer judgment, and can only wait to have it set straight before a higher tribunal.

"Eh bien!" says M. Janin, summing up on the whole case, "cet amour de Swift pour la belle Stella, c'est tout-à-fait l'histoire de l'espèce d'amour de Sterne pour Madame Draper. Il s'occupa de cette dame avec une tendresse infinie, mais il s'en occupa bien plus quand elle fut absente que lorsqu'elle était près de lui. Il était un peu dans les goûts de cet amant qui quittait sa maîtresse pour lui écrire et pour penser plus librement à elle." * Putting this beside Sterne's oft-repeated declaration, "I must ever have some Dulcinea in my head—it harmonizes the soul," some such Della Cruscan relation seems to be the true basis of all Mr. Sterne's attachments.

M. Janin justly considers that these letters, beyond the interest attaching to anything of Sterne's, have nothing very remarkable in style to recommend them. Still he considers the whole to have a certain natural charm which should recommend them to readers. This commentary on Sterne is very characteristic, and truly French; specially French, too, in some ludicrous mistakes.

* Introduction to the "Voyage Sentimental."

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

"ELIZA'S" LATER HISTORY.

We may here follow out the fortunes of the heroine of this romance. Mrs. Draper is said to have died in the year 1778, on her second visit to England, leaving "Daniel Draper, Esq.," a widower; who had then ceased to be "Councillor at Bombay," and had been promoted to be "Chief of the factory at Surat." It was hinted darkly that there were circumstances in the later career of Mrs. Draper that did not reflect credit upon her character or discretion.* She was then very young; but she had lived long enough to make for herself a sort of reputation.

When the *Earl of Chatham* was off St. Jago, she found an opportunity to send home letters to Mr. Sterne and to Mrs. James, by which it appeared that she had been very ill ever since she sailed. Eighteen days after leaving St. Jago, she was able to write another hurried letter, which Mr. Sterne sent to his friends; and which contained a dismal catalogue of sufferings, "continual and most violent rheumatism all the time, a fever brought on, with fits, and

* It is but fair to mention that there is no authority for this scandal beyond a mere publisher's note, which reports a rumour.

attended with delirium and every terrifying symptom. The recovery from this left her low, and emaciated to a skeleton." They had crossed the line, and were lying becalmed, and were apprehensive of losing their passage to Madras. After this her health began to mend, and her spirits improved, and she was finally restored to "Daniel Draper, Esq.," who, growing disquieted at the delay, had actually written home to inquire about "the Brahmin" and the "fair Indian," and perhaps about the misty stories that had floated out to him in slow Indiamen, outward-bound. Miss Light, her fellow cabin passenger, we are told, was not long after married to "George Stratton, Esq., Counsellor at Madras," but nothing has been preserved relative to the ultimate fortunes of "the young soldier," who so disquieted Mr. Sterne.

When the "Sentimental Journey" was in progress, that very year, Mr. Sterne, true to his habit of imparting a sort of vitality to his books by the introduction of portraits, brought in Eliza on several occasions. Thus, when bewailing the cruelty of the *droit d'aubaine*, he takes out "the little picture of Eliza," which, with the "black silk breeches, portmanteau and all, must have gone to the King of France." There was that "last flame, too, which had happened to be blown out by a whiff of jealousy on a sudden turn of a corner," and had been "lighted up afresh at the pure taper of Eliza, about three months before." *

* These remarks were more complimentary than accurate; for he could not have been acquainted with Eliza when he started on his journey.

These, with other allusions, naturally excited a certain public curiosity; and though the secret was known to the Lord Bathurst, and indeed all Mr. Sterne's friends, the circle soon widened. No wonder that Mrs. Draper should have put her name down for "three sets, imperial paper," of the book in which she was so complimented;* and when she came to England again, which she did about the year 1772 or 1773, she showed about the original letters of poor Yorick. Her vanity triumphed over her discretion, and she actually entered into a treaty with a publisher, for the purpose of giving them to the world. This person, with equal good taste, tried to persuade her to add to the collection her own replies to Mr. Sterne's effusions. The publisher could not help telling her, that "he wished to God she really was possessed of the vanity with which she was charged;" to which she replied, "that she was so far from acquitting herself of vanity, that she suspected that to be the cause why she could not prevail on herself to submit her letters to the public eye; for although Mr. Sterne was partial to everything of hers, she could not hope the world would be so too." With this answer he was "obliged to be contented." But he adds, that "it is much to be lamented that Eliza's modesty was invincible to all the publisher's endeavours," &c., "her wit, her penetration, and judgment, her happiness in the epistolary style, so rapturously commended by Mr. Sterne, could not fail to furnish a *rich entertainment* for the public."

* She also took a copy of Mr. Yorick's Sermons.

Much more to be lamented is it that Mr. Sterne's fame in so many instances should have been sacrificed to this indecent craze for publicity; for it is not too much to say, that there are few public men whose reputation, if the contents of their desks are pillaged, and thrust without winnowing or sifting into the hands of the crowd, will not seriously suffer.

This "rich entertainment," however, was supplied by other hands. A bookseller's hack, named Combe, of prodigious industry, was found to manufacture a wretched thing, called "Eliza's Letters to Yorick," which has actually taken in an intelligent French scholar, M. Michot. The same hand prepared a stream of fresh letters from "Yorick to Eliza"—transparent forgeries—which were, however, bought and eagerly read. Curious to say, he always maintained that he, and not Sterne, was the object of Eliza's affection, and used to tell a circumstantial story of his being with her at Brighton, and having to jump out of a window to avoid surprise, and of his having forgotten his slipper, which she afterwards showed him partly hidden in her muff, as they met upon the Steyne.*

Raynal, the "singe boursoufflé et essoufflé" of Diderot, seems to have made her acquaintance on this second visit to England. The first edition of "The History of the Indies," published in 1770, contains no mention of Mrs. Draper's perfections: but the second, which appeared some eight or nine years later, furnished the author with an opening for a burst of extravagant panegyric: a piece of

* Rogers' Table Talk.

bombast, which, it may be said, has scarcely a parallel in literature. Some Frenchmen have considered it sublime; others, with more correct taste, have seen it in its true light. It is certain that Mrs. Draper must have possessed attractions of no ordinary sort to have brought two such remarkable men to what may be called the very dotage of senile admiration.

"Territory of Ajinga," burst out the historian, when he comes to speak of that settlement, "thou hast nothing; but thou hast given birth to Eliza. One day all these trading *entrepôts* will have passed away; but if my writings are destined to last, the name of Ajinga shall rest in the memory of men." "Let me wipe away my tears; Eliza was my friend. Eliza inspired my works.* . . . I will weep for her all the days I have to live. She was to have come and lived in France. . . . What happiness I laid out for myself! She was to have closed my eyes."

He then, in a strain of drivelling rapture, describes her charms of person and manner. How "men said, that no woman ever possessed so many graces;" and how, what was a more impartial tribute, women said so also. She was "belle" simply, but not "très belle." She died in England when only thirty-three years old, and the enamoured writer describes her last moments† in a

* A statement scarcely true; for the history was written before his acquaintance with Eliza.

† Raynal was in England not long after, and most likely obtained this account from some friend of hers.

passage in which it is hard to say whether vanity or extravagance predominates most. "On her death-bed she spoke of me. I can hear her say, 'This muse now looking down on you is the muse of history. This *divinity* floating in the air is Fame, who talks with me about you—who has brought me your works.' From the Heavens' height—thy first and thy last country—Eliza, hear my oath. I swear never to write a line in which the world shall not recognise my friend."

The world, as might be expected, had no opportunity of making this recognition, nor indeed did this unique panegyric excite much curiosity. She was a very ordinary heroine. She died at Bristol, and was buried in the Cathedral, where there is an inscription to her memory—a pendant for the mason's epitaph that was to disfigure the grave of her admirer.

SACRED

TO THE MEMORY

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH DRAPER,

IN WHOM

GENIUS AND BENEVOLENCE
WERE UNITED.

SHE DIED AUG. 3D, 1778, AGED 35.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

FOREBODINGS.

This episode, together with his late fit of illness, left him very low in spirits and weak in body. Five days after the *Earl of Chatham* sailed, he wrote a dejected letter to his daughter, from which it is pretty plain that his boasted philosophy of finding happiness in one's self was breaking down. He had begun to have a suspicion that the intimacies of mere wit and fashion, and even sentiment, were but unsubstantial things to lean upon. They seemed to be falling fast away from him. Even his kind friend Mrs. James—and into his regard for her there did not enter a particle of his old habitual sentimentalism—was menaced with a decline. It had, perhaps, been well for him had he met these friends earlier in life—for they were judicious and sensible—knew his faults and follies, could warn him gently, and seemed to have possessed a real influence over him. Mr. Sterne owned he had "a thousand obligations to her." He was with her but two days before he wrote, and found her dreadfully altered, and talking calmly of quitting the world. He was in a melancholy mood, and his feelings took the shape of a poetical epitaph

—a proceeding that now may appear a little too much flavoured with false sentiment, but which in that day was a legitimate and correct expression of sympathy.*

"I am unhappy," he wrote; "thy mother and thyself at a distance from me, and what can compensate for such a destitution? For God's sake, persuade her to come and fix in England, for life is too short to waste in separation, besides, *I want thee near me, thou child* and darling of my heart." He added too, as a motive that might influence Mrs. Sterne, that people would naturally say their separation was from choice and not necessity. This piteous appeal from the lonely Shandean—writing in his Bond Street lodgings, ill in mind, broken-down in body, at last seems to have produced an effect. Had they been with him earlier, and Mrs. Sterne sacrificed a little of that "delicacy of mind" which was claimed for her afterwards—there can be no question but that his increasing affection for his daughter Lydia, now grown an object to be proud of, would have saved him from many of those sentimental scandals which now attach to his name.

But he presently had a relapse. He used to dine with his friends in Gerrard Street on Sundays, and he was foolish enough to venture out on a cold Sunday after taking a "James' Powder"—one of those fatal James' Powders which brought on Goldsmith's end. The results were "bad nights and much feverish agitation," and the remedies were of the usual desperate Sangrado order—bleeding two

* It has been given in an earlier portion of this work.

days in succession, leaving him "almost dead." He wrote to his friends from his bed an affectionate letter, full of gratitude. The physician, he said, told him his illness arose from his catching cold after the James' Powder; "but he is mistaken," said Mr. Sterne, gracefully and affectionately, "for I am certain that whatever bears that name must have efficacy with me. This friendly inquiry from Gerrard Street has poured balm into what blood I have left. . . . If I continue mending, it will yet be some time before I have strength enough to get out in a carriage. My first visit will be on a visit of true gratitude. I leave my kind friends to guess where. A thousand blessings go along with this, and may Heaven preserve you both. Adieu, my dear sir, and dear lady."

He presently concluded that country air was the fitting restorative—and that it would be well for him to exchange Bond Street for Coxwould as speedily as he could. By May the first he was well again, and possibly "merry and as mischievous as a monkey." He had fixed his departure for the first of May, but could not resist an invitation from Lord and Lady Spencer, who had made up a party to dine and sup—expressly for him. He had not lost his hold upon his fashionable friends. An Earl heard of his illness at Bath, and wrote up eagerly to inquire after him. To him Mr. Sterne imparted a few sound reflections which had suggested themselves while he lay sick and broken in Bond Street; the "few treacherous supports" the mind leans on in the world, "*the feigned compassion* of one—the flat-

tery of a second—the civilities of a third—they all deceive." In these latter days of his life, light of this sort seems to have been breaking in upon him—strange whispers, which came to him when he lay exhausted with his sunk and beaten chest and bloodless frame, and found a second to think over his gay wild racket of an existence.

Thus, the next morning—a Friday—when his chaise was at the door "to take and convey this poor body to its legal settlement," he wrote a hasty line to an Irish gentleman of fashion—"J. Dillon, Esquire," one of the March, Selwyn, and Gilly Williams *coterie*. "I am ill—very ill," he said; "I am sick, both soul and body—it is a cordial to me to hear it is different with you. I am glad you are in a fair road to happiness; enjoy it long, my dear Dillon, whilst I—no matter what——." He concludes: "You rogue! you have locked up my boots, *and I go bootless home, and fear* I shall go bootless all my life."

He travelled slowly; and was until Monday morning reaching Newark, where he arrived much exhausted. "Conveyed thus far," as he wrote from the hotel to Stevenson, "like a bale of cadaverous goods consigned to Pluto and Company, lying at the bottom of my chair upon a large pillow, which I had the *prévoyance* to purchase before I set out;" and there is something like pathos in his complaint. He goes on: "I am worn out. . . . I know not what is the matter with me; but some *dérangement* presses hard upon this machine; still I think it will not be over at this bout. My love to Lee. We

shall all meet from the east and from the south, and (as at last) be happy together. My kind respects to a few.—I am, dear Hall, truly yours, &c."

There is a sad quaintness in these few sentences very simple and natural. But his friend could readily have told him what was the *dérangement* that pressed upon the poor machine. That imprudent dinner and supper at Lord Spencer's, which he rose from his bed to go to, was but one more instance of the old Yorick folly.

On the road, near Doncaster, he was so exhausted, that he had to stop at the archbishop's, with whom he remained two days.

About this time the Duke of Montagu had in his service a black butler of remarkable intelligence, in whose story many persons of fashion took a good deal of interest. He had been born on board a slave-ship in the year 1727; had been baptized by a bishop at a Portuguese settlement, and given the name of Ignatius; had been taken to England by his master, and somehow had passed under the control of titled maiden ladies at Greenwich.

From some fanciful likeness to Don Quixote's Squire, they conferred on him the surname of Sancho; and thus becoming Ignatius Sancho, was reared with scrupulous care by the Greenwich ladies, whose supervision seriously encroached upon his personal liberty. He finally was established in the household of his patron the duke; was dismissed for some irregularities, spent all his savings, was taken back, and eventually died full of years, and in the receipt of an annuity, carried off by a fit

of the gout. At this time, strange stories of the horrors of the slave-trade were drifting home with every convoy; horrors which an angry feeling to the Spanish nation tended to exaggerate. The Duke of Montagu's black butler, so intelligent, so wonderfully educated for one of his colour, began to excite the sympathy of many persons of influence and station. It was even said, that a manager had made him offers to play Othello; but his imperfect pronunciation was found to be a fatal obstacle.

In the July of the previous year, when Mr. Sterne was busy at Coxwould with his ninth "Shandy," and, curious to say, just finishing his pretty sketch of the "poor negro girl," (Corporal Trim had just been asking, whether "a negro has a soul? an' please your honour," said the corporal doubtingly), when he received a letter from this intelligent black, containing an appeal for his coloured race. "Philanthropy I adore," he wrote. "How very much good, sir, am I (amongst millions) indebted to you for the character of your amiable Uncle Toby. I declare I would walk ten miles in the dog-days to shake hands with the honest corporal. . . . Of all my favourite authors, not one has drawn a tear in favour of my miserable black brethren excepting yourself, and the humane author of 'Sir Geo. Ellison.' . . . That subject handled in your striking manner would ease the yoke (perhaps) of many; but if only of one, gracious God, what a feast to a benevolent heart! . . . Dear sir, think in me you behold the uplifted hands of thousands of my brother Moors."

Mr. Sterne was not slow to acknowledge this genuine effusion. He told him of "the strange coincidence, Sancho," in his being engaged on the "tender tale" of the poor negro girl; and assured him of his best services in behalf of her brethren and sisters. "But why *her* brethren, or yours, Sancho, any more than mine? It is by the finest tints and most invisible gradations that nature descends from the fairest face about St. James' to the sootiest complexion in Africa." One of Mr. Sterne's happiest illustrations.

To the end of his days the intelligent negro used to rave of Mr. Sterne's writings, with whom, however, he sometimes coupled the "humane author of 'Sir George Ellison,'" a writer scarcely on a level with the English Rabelais. Sancho's letters were afterwards published with a marvellous list of patrons. They are written with surprising freedom, and are modelled with a ludicrous faithfulness on Mr. Sterne's style, and perhaps in some portions on that of "the humane author of 'Sir George Ellison.'"* His daughter's name was Lydia, no doubt a compliment to his friend.

When he was leaving town the next year, as we have just seen, in miserable health and spirits,

* How well he could imitate Mr. Sterne's epistolising manner, whose letters he yet could scarcely have seen, a specimen or two will show. "And how does Mad— M.? and is Miss S—— better? Mr. T., Mr. H.? Lord preserve me! what in the name of wonder have I to do with all this combustible matter?" "You kindly gave me liberty to bring Miss S—. Now pox take bad quills and bad pen-makers! Sir, it was fifty pounds to a bean-shell, but that you had had a blot as big as both Houses of Parliament."

Sancho called in Bond Street with the subscriptions of his noble patrons the Duke and Duchess, with that of her son, Lord Monthermer, for which Mr. Sterne wrote him a letter of thanks. But, with a practical sense of business, which shows that Mr. Sterne did not care to be too complaisant to nobility, he hints, "You have something to add, Sancho, and that is, to send me the subscription money, which I find a necessity of dunning my best friends for, before I leave town, to avoid the perplexities both of keeping pecuniary accounts (for which I have very slender talents), and collecting them (for which I have neither strength of body or mind); and so, good Sancho, dun the Duke of Montagu, the Duchess of Montagu, and Lord Monthermer, for their subscriptions, and lay the sin, and money with it too, at my door."

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

HOME AT COXWOULD.

When Mr. Sterne was again established at Coxwould, having been conveyed thither in his post-chaise "like a bale of cadaverous goods," he received a fresh letter from the black, and answered it. His letter shows that his health was improving. The "good air, a quiet retreat and quiet reflection along with it, with an ass to milk and another to ride out upon, all do wonders." And here, in this letter, we trace more of that altered and subdued tone which visited him during these latter months of his life—foreshadowings, as it were, of a final issue—with doubts as to whether his had been exactly the sort of life he could look back on without disquiet. "I shall live this year, at least, I hope," he wrote, "*be it but to give the world, before I quit it, as good impressions of me as you have, Sancho.* I would only covenant for just so much health and spirits as are sufficient to carry my pen through the task I have set it this summer. But I am a resigned being, Sancho, and take health and sickness just as the light and darkness, or the vicissitudes of the seasons, that is, just as it pleases God to send them." This task which he hoped to be spared to finish,

was his "Sentimental Journey." It seems as though he intended at this time to atone for past offences against decency, by his treatment of men and manners in this book; and it is curiously corroborative of this view, that the first volume does not contain a line offensive to morals, and is, on the contrary, pervaded with a gentle and subdued tone of sympathy, quite in harmony with the key in which he was writing. At this time, too—possibly because some of his cloth were looking coldly on him—he seems to have been inclined to deal with them less indulgently; for he had made Mr. Shandy and the Captain take a ride to "save a beautiful wood which the Dean and Chapter were hewing down to give to the poor," and then added a sarcastic note to the effect that Mr. Shandy "must mean the poor in spirit, inasmuch as they divided the money amongst themselves." From the very unnecessary way in which this was introduced, this must be a personal allusion to a Dean and Chapter very near him, who had, perhaps, insisted on sacrificing some pretty wood near Coxwould. He also introduced his former patron, the Bishop of Gloucester, and considering the inconsistent way in which he had been treated by that prelate, the allusion is very temperate. "For what has this book done," he said, alluding to his "Tristram," "more than the 'Legation of Moses,' or the 'Tale of a Tub,' that it may not swim down the gutter of Time along with them?" Anything offensive in the expression "the gutter of Time," is surely neutralised by the presence of the "Tale of a Tub"—a book of established fame—the

work of one of his masters in humour—at which it would have been folly to sneer. But I think there is a more plain allusion to Warburton's rough and virulent temper, in the scene of the Grace in the "Sentimental Journey," when the old peasant of the Savoy mountains expounded his simple faith, "that a cheerful and contented mind was the best sort of thanks to Heaven that an illiterate peasant could pay." "Or a learned prelate either," said Yorick.

He had begun to find an inexpressible relish in his place at Coxwould. He enjoyed his country associates, and felt as "happy as a prince." A shower of letters poured in upon him, all calling him to Scarborough, where the "jolly set," *i.e.* "Lord Granby and Co." were expecting him impatiently. Whether from being engaged with his books, or from a more wholesome feeling, he resisted the temptation. He described his new pastoral life to his friend Lee in a very tempting picture, like all his pictures: "'Tis a land of plenty; I sit down alone to venison, fish, and wild fowl, or a couple of fowls or ducks, with curds, and strawberries and cream, and all the simple plenty which a rich valley under Hamilton Hills can produce; with a clean cloth on my table, and a bottle of wine on my right hand to drink your health. I have a hundred hens and chickens about my yard; and not a parishioner catches a hare, or a rabbit, or a trout but he brings it as an offering to me." This last is a little testimony of popularity. His friend had been unsuccessful in some sentimental attachment,

and Mr. Sterne adds, that he would give him an invitation to Coxwould, "for absence could lessen no attachment which virtue inspires." He did not write to inquire about the lady, "for," he adds, "even How d'yes to invalids, or to those who had been lately so, either call to mind what is past, or what may return; at least I find it so."

He had now got a postchaise of his own, with "two long-tailed horses," in which he took airings every day. He had many pastoral enjoyments, but he owned, sadly, that he had "*what was worst of all, a disquieted heart to reason with.*" To his friend Hall Stevenson, a week or so later, he opened his soul, with the same dispiriting, and almost despairing confession. "As you are so well," he said in August, "rejoice, therefore, and let your heart be merry; mine ought upon the same score, for I have never been so well since I left college, *and should be a marvellous happy man, but for some reflections which bow down my spirits; but if I live but even three or four years, I will acquit myself with honour;* and—*no matter!* We will talk this over when we meet."

When we think of the character of the man to whom this acknowledgment was made, and of the "set" to whom it would most likely be shown, we must own it required some courage and independence in the writer to make such an avowal.

To his kind friends the Jameses, he wrote very much in the same dejected tone. All his letters to them were of the same genuine affectionate pattern.

"It is with as much true gratitude as ever heart felt, that I sit down to thank my dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. James, for the continuation of their attention to me; but for this last instance of their humanity and politeness to me, I must ever be their debtor—I never can thank you enough, my dear friends, and yet I thank you from my soul——and for the single day's happiness your goodness would have sent me, I wish I could send you back thousands——I cannot, but they will come of themselves——and so God bless you.—I am now got perfectly well, but was a month after my arrival in the country in but a poor state——*my body has got the start, and is at present more at ease than my mind*——but this world is a school of trials, and so heaven's will be done!—I hope you have both enjoyed all that I have wanted——and to complete your joy, that your little lady flourishes like a vine at your table, to which I hope to see her preferred by next winter. I am now beginning to be truly busy with my 'Sentimental Journey'—the pains and sorrows of this life having retarded its progress—but I shall make up my lee-way, *and overtake every body in a very short time.*

"What can I send you that Yorkshire produces? tell me—I want to be of use to you, for I am, my dear friends, with the truest value and esteem,

"Your ever obliged,

"L. STERNE."

Mrs. Sterne and her daughter had now settled to come to England; she had at last yielded to her

husband's importunities, and announced her intention; but, by some fatality, about half-a-dozen of Mr. Sterne's letters to her had gone astray, which gave him a good deal of concern, "as it wore the aspect of unkindness, which she by no means merits from me." This was to his friends the Jameses. To Stevenson he wrote of the same awkward misfortune:—"Not one of my letters have got to Mrs. Sterne since the notification of her intentions, which has a pitiful air on my side, though I have wrote six or seven. I imagine she will be here the latter end of September, though I have no data for it but her impatience, which having suffered by my supposed silence, I am persuaded, will make her fear the worst; if that is the case, she will fly to England."

It was now the beginning of August. At the beginning of June he was "in high spirits: care never enters this cottage." But now the spirits had fallen to zero. He sat moping in his vicarage, with no other company than his cat. "I long to return to you," he wrote to Crazy Castle; "but I sit here alone as solitary and sad as a tom-cat, which, by the bye, is all the company I keep; he follows me from the parlour to the kitchen, into the garden, and every place. I wish I had a dog. My daughter will bring me one."

We have a sketch of his dog in a letter to his daughter about this time: and again we must remark the gentle simple tone he was gradually falling into. "My pleasures are few in compass. My poor cat sits purring beside me. Your lively French dog

shall have his place on the other side of my fire; but if he is as devilish as when I first saw him, I must tutor him, *for I will not have my cat abused.* In short, I will have nothing devilish about me." Thus he had within him what has been held a favourable test of human character—a gentle toleration for animals. A mere hollow sentimentalist would scarcely have suffered "a poor cat purring beside him."

About this time he lost the use of his chaise and "long tail'd horses," from an accident to his postilion. One of Mr. Sterne's pistols had gone off in his hand—a mishap which, told by his master, becomes Shandean. "He instantly fell on his knees," wrote Mr. Sterne, "and said, Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name,—at which, like a good Christian, he stopped, not remembering any more of it. The affair was not so bad as he at first thought, for it has only *bursten* two of his fingers (he says)."

By the end of this month, too, he was "bad again." The old spitting of blood visited him once more.

He could jest with the public, as well as with Lord Effingham, upon these dreadful visitations. "It is one comfort," he said, in his ninth Shandy, "that I lost some fourscore ounces of blood this week in a most uncritical fever, which attacked me at the beginning of this chapter."

As he lay weak and exhausted upon his back, some neighbour made his way up-stairs to see him. "That unfeeling brute . . . . . ," says Mr. Sterne

in his odd way, "came and drew my curtains, and with a voice like a trumpet, halloed in my ear, 'Z—ds, what a fine kettle of fish you have brought yourself to.' In a faint voice I bade him leave me, for comfort sure was never administered in so rough a manner." This little scene, short as it is, is very graphic, and seems ludicrous. In fact, all these little sketches that turn up in his letters show plainly that his humour of Tristram came naturally to him, and broke out on other occasions than when he was at his desk writing for the press.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

THE LAST LONDON VISIT.

At the beginning of September, he was tempted to Scarborough for some sea-bathing. He remained but ten days, and during that time was the guest of an Irish bishop—"one of the best of our bishops"—most likely Dr. Jemmatt Browne, Bishop of Cork.* "His household consisted of a gentleman and two ladies, which, with the good bishop and myself, made so good a party, that we kept much to ourselves."

His "mitred host" took a great fancy to him, and tried to tempt him over to Ireland by a living. They left Scarborough together, and being fifteen miles "off," the bishop and his family went on to to London, and Mr. Sterne returned home. His friends, the Jameses, heard that he had actually gone up to London with the episcopal party, and were a little wounded at his not coming to them. "This, I suppose, was the reason assigned for my being there. *Charity*," adds Mr. Sterne bitterly, thinking of the old calumnies that persecuted Yorick, "*would add a little to the account, and give out that 'twas on the score of one, and perhaps both, of the ladies.*"

* This is the only Irish bishop's name we find in the list of subscribers to his "Sentimental Journey."

The Avignon ladies were now at length starting for England. There was a little gaiety and a little business to be got through before they were to leave. The gaieties were a series of *fêtes champêtres*, given by the Marquis de Sade, a relation of his friend the abbé of the same name. The Dowager Lady Carlisle met the abbé later, and thought him "the liveliest little old man" she had ever met. The business was the drawing on Mr. Sterne for forty louis, a draft he at once took measures to provide for. Mrs. Sterne, who had a little estate of her own, was consulting the Paris banker on purchasing a little annuity for her daughter; and Mr. Sterne knowing, perhaps, that advice from him might be accepted doubtfully, considerately instructed his bankers to advise her to insure her life. For, as he truly said, if his daughter died *before* Mrs. Sterne, the latter would suffer seriously.

He was still desponding. To a "Sir William," another of his roystering friends, who was pressing him to come back to Scarborough, and bantering him freely, he wrote a little banter in return,—"Enough of such nonsense. The past is over, and I can justify myself unto myself—can you do as much? No, faith! 'You can feel.' Ay, so can my cat. . . . . but caterwauling disgusts me. I had rather raise a gentle flame than have a different one raised on me. *Now, I take Heaven* to witness, after all this *badinage, my heart is innocent; and the sporting of my pen is equal—just equal to what I did in my boyish days, when I got astride of a stick and galloped away. The truth is this—that my pen*

governs me, not me my pen." And though there is a reckless, half-defiant tone in this declaration, still, taking it with what he has said so lately, and the gaiety of the man to whom it is spoken, we may accept it as a genuine and heartily sincere profession of the spirit that guided him when he wrote his strange rambling Shandy olla podrida.

To the same gentleman he spoke of the new work then fast advancing, which was to convince him and others "that my feelings are from the heart; and then that heart is not of the worst of moulds. Praised be God for my sensibility! Though it has often made me wretched, *yet I would not exchange it for all the pleasures the grossest sensualist ever felt.*"

On the last day of September the travellers got to York; and going in with his chaise and "long-tail'd horses," Mr. Sterne met his wife and darling daughter once more. With the latter he was in raptures; and the fond father, writing to his friends, could not contain his delight at her manners, mind, figure, and everything about her. She had come back "an elegant, accomplished little slut." "Nature, my dear Panchaud"—the banker had overpowered them with civilities as they passed through Paris—"breathes in all her composition, and except a little vivacity, *which is a fault in the world we live in,* I am fully content with her mother's care of her; for she is as accomplished a slut as France can produce." Charming, indeed, are all his letters wherein this favoured child figures; and for the sake of this affection—so true, so simple, so

natural—much may be forgiven him. A cold professional sentimentalist, hawking about his tears and sham sorrows, could not have found room for so homely a thing as mere paternal affection.

To the James' he described her in the same fond terms some six weeks afterwards, when the sense of surprise and novelty might have worn off. "She is a dear, good creature, affectionate, and most elegant in body and mind; she is all Heaven could give me in a daughter, but like other blessings, not given but lent; for her mother loves France, and this dear part of me must be torn from my arms to follow the mother, who seems inclined to establish her in France where she has had many advantageous offers. Do not smile at my weakness, when I say I don't wonder at it."

With Coxwould now repeopled, he pushed on steadily with his new book, and "spurred on his Pegasus," in order to have it ready for the customary Christmas offering. He found it an agreeable labour, and "suited to the frame of mind I have been in for some time past;" but later on he admitted to a noble friend that he had "worn out both my spirits and my body with the Sentimental Journey," and had "torn my whole frame into pieces by my feelings." There was no doubt but that his nerves were giving way, and he was laying out a visit to London, at Christmas, with his new wares—a visit in which his wish to see his friends, the James', again had some share. "I long sadly to see you," he wrote to them. "With what pleasure shall I embrace your little pledge, whom I hope to

see every hour increasing in stature and favour both with God and man. I kiss all your hands with a most devout and friendly heart. No man can wish you more good *than your meagre friend does*—few so much, for I am with infinite cordiality, gratitude, and honest affection, &c." That he was thinking of them with a sincere regard at a distance, is plain from a postscript to an earl of his acquaintance. "If your lordship is in town this Spring, I should be happy if you became acquainted with my friends in Gerrard Street; you would esteem the husband and honour the wife. She is the reverse of most of her sex: they have various pursuits; *she but one, that of pleasing her husband.*"

By the beginning of December he and Mrs. Sterne had their plans finally arranged. She was determined to return to France with her daughter in the Spring, but in the meantime a house "ready furnished" had been hired in York, where they might spend the winter and have some gaiety. Mr. Sterne was to go up to London in January with his book and stay a month or two there. Surely this was considerate on the part of the father; who did not wish in his absence to consign them to the solitude of Coxwould. Nor must it be supposed that these expeditions of his were without direct profit to all their interests. Already another Irish bishop, the Bishop of Ross, was making him offers, and an advantageous exchange of livings had been proposed to him —to give up Sutton and Stillington, for £350 a-year in Surrey, and only thirty miles from London. But he rejected the rich offer and the Surrey preferment

If his wife and daughter would have gone with him he might have been tempted. "With her sweet light burden in my arms," he wrote of his Lydia, "I could get fast up the hill of preferment if I chose it, but without my Lydia, if a mitre were offered me it would sit uneasily upon my brow." These episcopal dreams were unsubstantial enough. Though it "hailed mitres" not a single one was to fall on Yorick's head; but it is clear that he was now on the road to some smaller preferment.

When they had completed their arrangements and moved into York, his spirits began to sink again. Every day was bringing him nearer that separation. "My heart bleeds, Lee," he wrote with true pathos, "when I think of parting with my child—'twill be like the separation of soul and body . . . and equal to nothing but what passes at that tremendous moment: *and like it in one respect—for she will be in one kingdom whilst I am in another.* You will laugh at my weakness," he goes on, "but I can't help it—for she is a dear, disinterested girl." And then he tells with pride of a little trait of character, how he had put ten guineas into her hand for her "private expenses" at York, and how she had refused this present on the plea that their journey home had already "straitened him," and that she would rather put a hundred guineas in his pocket "than take ten out of it."

But now on the eve of his departure he was seized with the old shape of illness—"cast down by a fever and bleeding at the lungs," which kept him in bed three weeks. But he struggled through—the last

time he was to struggle through—and rose "worn down to a shadow," and weak as a child. In this state he was comforted by a letter from his friends, the James', and wrote them a letter which reflects the tone of his mind.* "I had the favour of yours," he says, "which, till to-day, I have not been able to thank you both kindly for, as I now cordially do, as well as for all your professions and proofs of goodwill to me. I will not and have not balanced accounts with you in this. All I know is that I honour and value you more than I do any good creatures upon earth. . . . And that I would not wish your happiness, and the success of whatever conduces to it, more than I do, was I your brother. . . . . I thank you, my dear friend, for what you say so kindly about my daughter—it shows your good heart; for as she is a stranger 'tis a free gift in you, but when she is known to you, shall win it fairly, *but, alas! when this event is to happen is in the clouds.*

"What a sad scratch of a letter! but I am weak, my dear friends, both in body and mind—so God bless you. You will see me enter like a ghost, so I tell you beforehand not to be frightened. I am, my dear friends, with the truest attachment and esteem, ever yours, &c." †

* I venture to quote more of these letters to the James' than of any others, as they are important testimonies to his real character.

† He was able too, at this time, to sit for his bust—a vigorous and characteristic head. There are two of these busts now in existence—one a copy. The original is at Skelton Castle, and was perhaps done at the request of Mr. Hall; the other is in the Yarborough collection. There is, besides, the terra cotta bust done at Rome.

After Christmas-day, he started with his friend Hall for town. It was to be his last journey. He was still ill, and had scarcely shaken off his fever; travelling under such circumstances was hardly prudent. Still, if he had remained, his restless mind would have been chafing at the restraint. He embraced his wife and daughter, and for the last time was to look upon the Lydia he so idolized. No doubt the separation was "like the parting of soul and body." He had done for ever with his "sweet retirement" of Coxwould, his Cathedral stall, and the local persecutors of the luckless Yorick.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

"THE SOHO ASSEMBLY."

MRS. STERNE and her daughter remained behind at York, in the house which he had hired for them. They engaged in the York gaieties. Miss Lydia Sterne must have been possessed of unusual attractions, with a certain piquancy reflected from her father,—heightened too by a French education and "that vivacity" which he thought present in too extreme a degree. Making every allowance for Mr. Sterne's partial admiration, she must have been attractive. In the family of the Sternes is still kept a portrait of a young girl and spaniel, "The French Dog," done by a French artist—Charpentier —a very graceful portrait, and always accepted as that of Mr. Sterne's daughter.

In addition to the vivacity she had brought home, she had also contracted a little French vanity, and perhaps a little French folly. The letters she wrote after her father's death exhibit a curious mixture of flippancy and childishness. She was coming home with all the toilette glories of rouge pots and cosmetics, which her father, thinking perhaps of that luckless Irish belle—the beautiful Coventry—who had killed herself with white lead, sternly insisted

should be flung into the Sorgue before she set out. "I will have no rouge put on in England," was his firm decision, and perhaps the harshest thing he ever wrote to her. She was left behind for the gay York winter: certain of the admiration which her natural charms and French manners were sure to attract; certain at least of being pointed to with interest and curiosity, as the lively daughter of quaint Tristram. The father of Mr. Waterton the pleasant traveller and skilful naturalist, used to tell his son, how he had been introduced to Miss Lydia Sterne at the great York balls in Lord Burlington's Assembly Rooms, and had often stood up with her for a minuet.

Mr. Sterne was again at his Old Bond Street lodgings, and already found his health a little better. "I continue to mend," he wrote to his friends in Gerrard Street upon the first day of the New Year, "and doubt not but this, with all other evils and uncertainties of life, will end for the best." It was a wet morning and he was afraid to go out, so he writes to send all compliments and best wishes to the firesides. He was "half engaged or more" for the Sunday, but would try hard to get off; if unsuccessful, he would "glide like a shadow uninvited to Gerrard Street some day this week, that we may eat our bread and meat in love and peace together. God bless you both." But with all this jealous care of himself he could not resist the old seductions, and before long was mortgaged heavily, weeks in advance, to the old fatal round of parties and entertainments, "tyed down," as he put it, "neck and

heels twice over." Yet it seems to have been more a feeling of inability to resist, than a sense of enjoyment; for he complains with weariness of the invasion of his rooms in Bond Street by streams of company, who came in the morning and did not leave until dinner time. After these levees a sense of utter prostration used to come upon him.

It is Northcote who picked up a curious and in part improbable story, about Sterne's conversation, the date of which may be about this time. Sir Joshua had a dinner-party, at which the well-known Mrs. Carter, a pious lady of the day, was a guest; and it is said that during the dinner she attacked Mr. Sterne for his free conversation with such wit and severity, that he never recovered this sharp public reprimand. It is improbable that one who had seen so much of the world could have been so sensitive, but we may be inclined to suspect, if the story be true, that with that subdued feeling and sense of the hopelessness of his recovery which was now weighing on his mind, he may have shown a depression at the reproof, which those who were present might have imputed to the lady's powers of reproach. There was quite enough in the state of his health at that time to account reasonably for his death.*

* I feel some delicacy in touching on the subject of two anecdotes relating to Sterne's speech and manners in society; but an impartial biographer could not pass them by. Doctor Johnson told Sir John Hawkins that the only occasion he had been in Sterne's society, the latter had exhibited a very indecent print; and I think it is Doctor Dibdin who mentions having heard of a copy of the "Sentimental Journey," illustrated by Sterne himself with very gross pictures. Testimony of

While in Bond Street, he received from America a present of a rather odd sort. A Doctor Eustace had come into possession of a curiously-carved walking-stick which had belonged to "Governor Dobbs." This "piece of Shandean statuary" Mrs. Dobbs presented to Doctor Eustace, and he forwarded it to the author of Tristram, hoping "it might prove so ample a field for meditation, as a button-hole or a broom-stick." Mr. Sterne acknowledged the compliment gratefully—and on February the Ninth, about six weeks before his death—wrote to the American gentleman what may be accepted as his final profession and last protest against what he considered the misconstruction that had been put upon his books. Reading it so near to his death, it does, indeed, seem almost like Yorick's

this sort, coming from two such distinct quarters, does, indeed, seem of weight. But to the last anecdote, there is, I think, quite a convincing answer. The "Journey" appeared about a week before his last illness—in fact, at a time when he was already physically helpless and in the grasp of death. In the tone and temper he was then, and with the consciousness that his end was not far away, it seems utterly improbable that he should have committed such an outrage. It may be said that it was the MS. of the book, written many months before, that was so adorned; but this I have seen, and there are no such illustrations. As to what Doctor Johnson saw, we must remember his violent prejudices against "the man Sterne," and that the house and host whom Johnson honoured with his company, was not likely to be the house or host to whom such an exhibition would be acceptable. If it was at Reynolds's, it might have been some of the "six beautiful pictures of the sculptures on poor Ovid's tomb," which Sterne brought from Rome. Even one of the pictures with which Sterne illustrated his friend Woodhall's poems—conceived as it was in a classical taste—might deserve Johnson's severe censure. We know the reason he gave Garrick for declining to frequent the *coulisses* of Drury Lane. There is no wish for special pleading here; but it is only fair to take, with the story, such matter as may colour it.

protest. "Your walking-stick is in no sense more Shandaick than in that of its having more handles than one; the parallel breaks only in this, that in using the stick every one will take the handle which suits his convenience: in 'Tristram Shandy' the handle is taken which suits the passions—their ignorance or their sensibility. There is so little true feeling in the herd of the world, that I wish I could have got an Act of Parliament when the books first appeared that none but wise men should look unto them." He then adds—that all the people of genius in the country, "a few hypocrites and Tartuffes excepted," had come round to his side, and he says that it has had a wonderful reception in France, Germany, and Italy. Thus we see to the very end he strangely believed that he was a sort of victim to the prejudices of a faction, and to the last, with a perversion not in the least unnatural, supposed what he had written to be harmless. Or what is even more probable, he felt all through, the gross inconsistency of the censure that came from the mouths of "hypocrites and Tartuffes."

At this time the entertainments of the notorious Mrs. Cornely, at the Soho Rooms, were the fashionable *furcurs* of the moment. This was owing not so much to the amusement itself, as to an artful rigour in the issuing of tickets. During the first days of this new year, one of these select festivals was to be celebrated, and Mrs. James had seen in the newspapers of Monday, January the 4th, an advertisement to this effect:—"Mrs. Cornely begs leave to acquaint the Nobility and Gentry

Subscribers to the Society in Soho Square, that the Second Meeting will be on Thursday next. The Tickets are this year transferable either to ladies or gentlemen—the same as they were the winter before last." *

Mr. and Mrs. James were wishing to get a ticket for this important festival, and though they knew Lord Upper Ossory, and other persons of fashion, they turned to Mr. Sterne to help them in their necessity. Most likely they wanted it not for themselves, but for "Miss Ascough, the wise;" "Miss Pigot, the witty;" or some other young lady of their circle. Mr. Sterne was not a subscriber this year—which, like a straw as it is upon the surface—shows that he he had in some degree forsworn frivolity. But he sent about diligently to one after another of his "Soho friends." If he failed he hoped they would do him the justice to believe him "truly miserable."

The next day, ill as he was, he hurried over the town, posted to the secretary of state, to Sir George Macartney—now to be a new peer—to Mr. Lascelles, to Mr. FitzMaurice, begging, importuning, for one of these coveted tickets—but he said truly, he "could as soon get a place at Court." †

Mrs. James had just been sitting to West, the painter, who, in Mr. Sterne's opinion, had made an admirable likeness. It was not finished, and on Sunday, the 7th of March, Mr. Sterne was to "tread the old pleasing road from Bond to Gerrard

* Public Advertiser.

† Angelo, the fencing-master, who lived near the Square, recollected how he used to be kept awake all night by the noise of these festivals.

Street," and be there before four, so as to have "a little time and a little daylight to see Mrs. James's picture." To West, Lydia Sterne was to sit a little later. Mrs. James herself was something of an artist, and Mr. Sterne sent her as a present a box of water-colours, and gave a few lessons. He borrowed some sketches touched with chalk, from a gentleman who had travelled in Italy, as subjects for her to copy. This gentleman had sent him a set of prints, which Mr. Sterne promised himself to hang up in his study—"if," he added, with but too faithful a foreboding, "I recover from my state of health, *and live to revisit Coxwould this summer.*"

Mr. Sterne's friend also was to dine in Gerrard Street on the following Sunday, and it was settled that they should go together at the same time, a little earlier than usual, so as to have light to see West's picture. But even on that Sunday, he could not be free or at rest: for Mr. Beauclerk—Boswell's Beauclerk—had engaged him to breakfast, and a nobleman had secured the reversion of his company for an hour at least, after the breakfast. So to the end, the old racket was in his ears, the old din and hurly-burly of society was echoing about him.

This Sunday dinner at Gerrard Street was to be Yorick's last festival. It is something to think that when he made his bow to society he passed from the quiet pure atmosphere of that good and virtuous family.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

YORICK'S DEATH-BED.

THE new book was now all but ready, and in a note dated Thursday, which he wrote to his "dear friends" jointly, excusing himself for a mistake of Saturday for Sunday, the old dining day:—"I am astonished I could make any mistake in a card wrote by Mrs. James, in which my friend is as unrivalled as in a hundred greater excellencies." He promises that his books will be out on the Thursday following, but possibly on the Wednesday afternoon. They did not appear until the latter of these days, which was the 27th of February. The price was the usual one of five shillings for the two pretty volumes, and subscribers were respectfully requested to send for their copies to Messrs. Becket and P. de Hondt, in the Strand. The work itself was announced as "Vol. 1 and 2, of a Sentimental Journey through France and Italy," showing that this, too, was an idea which he would have expanded like Tristram, through many volumes. He at first had laid out a change in the shape of publication, and thought ambitiously of a stately quarto, with handsome margin, the price to be half a guinea. But wisely he returned to the favourite Shandy size—

the compact little pocket volumes, which were now so familiar to the public. How much has the world lost—how many charming pictures of Italian life and character—by the sudden relaxing of those thin fingers and the busy pen they held!

This was now at hand. About the second week of the next month, being still "tied down neck and heels with engagements," he was seized with a chest attack, which he took for influenza, but which clung to him with more than usual obstinacy. He struggled with it, and seemed to think he would as usual come off victorious. Just at that time a letter came to him from his daughter, which must have had a chilling, dispiriting effect, notwithstanding that it set out with news of "the Journey" being read and admired in York by every one.

Mrs. Sterne had been prudently forecasting the future; and the mother had told her daughter that it was Mr. Sterne's intention to bequeath the care of his Lydia to the Indian lady, whom the world knew as Eliza. "The subject of thy letter," wrote Mr. Sterne with some agitation, "has astonished me. She could know but little of my feelings to tell thee that I should bequeath thee as a legacy to Mrs. Draper." He then reassures her, and tells her how Mrs. James will watch over her—"the friend whom I have so often talked and wrote about; from her you will learn to be an affectionate wife, a tender mother, and a sincere friend." He then alludes to the success of his book; "but what is the gratification of my feelings on this occasion—the want of health bows me down—this vile influ-

enza—*be not alarmed, I think I shall get the better of it*, and shall be with you both the first of May; and if I escape, 'twill not be for a long period, my child, unless a quiet retreat and peace of mind can restore me."

Nothing can be more tenderly delicate than that hurried correction of himself, "be not alarmed, I think I shall get the better of it;" and the gentle way—almost artful—in which he goes on to prepare his daughter's mind for the worst. "If I escape, 'twill not be for a long period, my child. But I think, my Lydia, thy mother will survive me—do not deject her spirits with thy affections on my account." He sends them both a present of a necklace and buckles. "I am never alone," he goes on, "the kindness of my friends is ever the same. *I wish, though, I had thee to nurse me; but I am deny'd that.* Write to me twice a week at least. God bless thee, my child; and believe me *ever, ever* thy affectionate father, L. S."

"If I ever revisit Coxwould!" He was hurrying fast from that "sweet retirement." What he took for a "vile influenza," became a pleurisy; and on the Thursday following (March 10th) he was bled three times, and on the next day blistered. He was prostrate and exhausted for several days after this violent treatment; but as he lay there, the thought of the child he loved so dearly came upon him, and with a feeble hand he was just able to write a few tottering characters to his friend, Mrs. James. So piteous and touching an appeal has rarely come from a death-bed: it was the poor,

broken, gasping, dying Yorick's last letter. In it we seem to hear an humble acknowledgment of errors, and a cry for pardon for "follies which my heart, not my head, betrayed me into!"—a declaration we may accept as genuine, and which is the true key to all his Shandean sins, errors, mistakes, and follies.

"15th March, Tuesday.

"Your poor friend is scarce able to write——he has been at death's door this week with a pleurisy ——I was bled three times on Thursday, and blister'd on Friday——The physician says I am better—God knows, for I feel myself sadly wrong, and shall, if I recover, be a long while of gaining strength. ——Before I have gone thro' half this letter, I must stop to rest my weak hand above a dozen times—Mr. James was so good to call upon me yesterday. I felt emotions not to be described at the sight of him, and he overjoy'd me by talking a great deal of you.——Do, dear Mrs. James, entreat him to come to-morrow, or next day, for perhaps I have not many days, or hours, to live—I want to ask a favour of him, if I find myself worse——that I shall beg of you, if in this wrestling I come off conqueror—my spirits are fled—'tis a bad omen—do not weep, my dear Lady——your tears are too precious to shed for me——bottle them up, and may the cork never be drawn.——Dearest, kindest, gentlest, and best of women! may health, peace, and happiness prove your handmaids.——If I die, cherish the remembrance of me, and forget the follies which you so often condemn'd—which my

heart, not my head, betray'd me into. Should my child, my Lydia, want a mother, may I hope you will (if she is left parentless) take her to your bosom? —You are the only woman on earth I can depend upon for such a benevolent action.——I wrote to her a fortnight ago, and told her what, I trust, she will find in you——Mr. James will be a father to her—he will protect her from every insult, for he wears a sword which he has served his country with, and which he would know how to draw out of the scabbard in defence of innocence.——Commend me to him—as I now commend you to that Being who takes under his care the good and kind part of the world.—Adieu! all grateful thanks to you and Mr. James.

"Your poor affectionate friend,

"L. STERNE."

This was Tuesday. Friday was the last day of his life. He seems to have been left there, at Bond Street,—alone, deserted, and entirely dependent (scarcely in the sense he had wished) on the hired offices of a lodging-house servant.*

But little is known of his last moments. Towards four o'clock in the afternoon he complained of cold in his feet, and asked the attendant to chafe them. Some way this suggests the end of Falstaff. It seemed to relieve him; but presently he said the cold was mounting yet higher; and while she

* M. Janin, with an eye to a bit of ghastly sentimentality wholly indefensible, transforms this person into "Mad.—— de ——, sa belle et aimable garde-malade," and makes the dying Yorick place her hand upon his heart.

was striving to kindle a warmth in his feet and ankles, which a more awful power was driving away, some one knocked at the hall-door, and the landlady opening it, found it was a footman sent to inquire after Mr. Sterne's health. In Clifford Street close by, "Fish" Crawford was having a grand dinner-party, served by his "French cook," and most of the guests at table were friends of the dying humorist. Of the company were the Dukes of Grafton and Roxburghe, the Earls of March and Ossory; Mr. Garrick, Mr. Hume, and Mr. James. Some one having mentioned his illness—Mr. James most probably—it was proposed to send to know how he was, and the footman, whose name has been preserved, was despatched to New Bond Street, to inquire.

The landlady was not able, or did not care, to give him the latest news, but bade him go up and inquire of the attendant. He did so, and entered the room just as the deserted Shandean was expiring. He stood by and waited to see the end; he noted how the wasted arm was suddenly raised, as if to ward off something, caught a murmur of "Now it is come!" and then saw his frame relax in death.*

This was Yorick's end—a footman and a sick-nurse watching his agonies. The footman went his way back to the merry party of gentlemen in Clifford Street, and told what he had seen. The gentlemen, he says, were all very sorry, and lamented him very much. We can almost hear

* This is the account given by James Macdonald, the Scotch footman, in his "Memoirs."

the after-dinner panegyric: Hume and Garrick could have told of his freaks in Paris, and bewailed with convivial grief how Yorick had been no one's enemy but his own. Mr. James could have said something about his good heart. Then, as of course, the claret went round, and Lord March went back again to the praises of "the Rena," or the "Zamperini."

So Yorick passed away, lonely, abandoned. Not in this sense, truly, did he mean that poor bald scrap of philosophy which he had set down in his Tristram, to be interpreted—when he wished to die in an inn, and to have the cold hired offices of strangers to soothe his last moments. This was a poor bit of Shandyism, set down to startle the crowd. Perhaps it came back on him, when he saw the footman standing in the doorway, and felt the woman secretly stripping him of his ornaments. For it was said, that while one hired hand was chafing the poor Shandean's icy limbs, the other was busy plundering him of his gold sleeve-buttons.* But, as will be seen, a still more horrid mystery—like the *feu follet* of a grave-yard—was destined to overshadow what remained of Yorick.

* This was told to Doctor Ferriar.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

YORICK'S GRAVE.

"DIED yesterday," said the journals of Saturday, "at his lodgings, in Bond Street, the Rev. Mr. Sterne, author of 'Tristram Shandy,' some volumes of sermons, and the 'Sentimental Journey.'" Some added, "Alas! Poor Yorick!" Poor Yorick indeed! when the very bookseller's hack, who made profit out of the new edition of his works, could prefix to it so cruel and so illogical a statement as the following: "Mr. Sterne died as he lived, the same indifferent careless creature; *as*, a day or two before his death he seemed not in the least affected by his approaching dissolution." I need not to appeal to those who have borne with me patiently, while telling the story of Mr. Sterne's life, as to what truth there is in this statement. But it is useful as another illustration of his unlucky destiny, in being the special mark of flippant stories, and unsubstantial paragraphs.

In the Bayswater Road, not very far from Tyburn Gate, a new burying-ground had been opened—attached to that church in Hanover Square, where the more fashionable marriage-rites are celebrated. We can readily find our way to it now, for it is noto-

rious among the neglected graveyards of London: and is useful as a sort of huge pit for the rubbish of the ruinous houses that hem it in closely all round. Weeds rioting in their impurity, yawning graves, headstones staggering over, dirt, neglect, and a squalid-looking dead-house, all soiled and grimed, with a belfry and a bell — this is now the condition of the grave-yard where Laurence Sterne is supposed to lie. It was then "the new burying-ground, near Tyburn;" and to this spot, on the day of his interment, at twelve o'clock noon, came a single mourning coach, with "two gentlemen inside." One of them is known to have been Becket, his publisher; the other we fairly assume to have been his friend Mr. James. The bell, over the soiled and grimed dead-house, was not allowed to ring. And in this "private" manner (a privacy almost amounting to shame), was the body of the great humorist consigned to earth. The "two gentlemen" represented the splendid roll of nobility and gentry that "pranced" before his sermons! One more instance of the fatal blight of desertion that seems to attend on the jesters of society, at their grave.

Now follows that strange and ghastly scene, at which the meagre figure of poor Yorick, upon which he and others were so often merry, was to make a last appearance.

When the "two gentlemen" were seeing the earth laid upon their friend's remains, there were other and more profane eyes watching from the road, and marking the spot. At that time the tribe of

resurrection-men pursued their calling as lawlessly as highwaymen did theirs upon the road. And this "new Tyburn burying-ground" had already acquired a notoriety, as being the scene of constant outrages of this kind. Only a few months before, it had become necessary to place regular watchers there, and a large mastiff dog: in spite of which precautions, the infamous spoliation continued.*

Two nights after, on the 24th, the men came, dug up the body, placed it in a case, and sent it away down to Cambridge.

"Mr. Collignon, B.M.," of Trinity, was then Professor of Anatomy, and it had been disposed of to him. These aids to medical science being costly, and procured with difficulty, Mr. Collignon invited some friends to see him illustrate anatomy on the body that had been sent down to him from London; and an old friend of Mr. Sterne, who was of the party, was inexpressibly shocked at recognising the familiar features, and fainted away on the spot. It was too late, unfortunately, to save the body from the knife, for the dissection had nearly been completed.

What a close to Yorick's strange career, which began in wanderings, and brought him back thus finally to his old University! There is even a grim lurid Shandeism over the scene, a charnel-house humour in that recognition of the strange lean Yorick features—more lean in death—upon the dissecting table.

But the evidence on which the story is founded

* See *St. James's Chronicle*, Nov. 1767.

seems too convincing not to be accepted. There had been many indistinct shapes of the statement—some improbable—but all pointing indistinctly in that direction. Mr. Allan Cunningham had heard that the body had been sold by the landlady in discharge of her rent; a not very likely proceeding when she had seen her first-floor lodgings filled every day with the highest in the land, some of whom at least would have interfered to prevent such a desecration. A few later months it was stated that "the body of the late Mr. Sterne" had been "anatomised." The story was accepted at the time as true, and got into the newspapers. The late Mr. Malone actually spoke with the gentleman who was present at the dissection and recognised the features; and an unknown note-maker has written on his fly-leaf of an old copy of the 'Sentimental Journey'—the first edition—that "the Rev. Mr. Green told me, that being at Cambridge a short time after, he saw the skeleton, and had the story confirmed to him by the Professor;"* and the fact of that grave-yard being so habitually plundered—the mean funeral, which would hint that it was a person of humble rank,—seems to confirm the hideous tale irresistibly. For this reason it was natural that no friend should have thought of placing a monument to mark the spot where he had been interred. A poetical epitaph by Garrick, of indifferent merit, went round and was admired; but it was felt, perhaps, that

* Willis's "Current Notes." These MS. notes in old books should have great authority, though unconfirmed by chapter or verse.

the circumstances were too painful, and that a memorial would only revive the recollection. Long after, two persons—freemasons—noted the absence of a monument, and set up a headstone, with an inscription beginning—"*Near* this place is interred &c.," which is yet a further confirmation of the story; as it shows that the spot could not be pointed out to them. The headstone, with its inscription, is indeed a memorial, not of Sterne, but of these masons' vanity and bad taste.*

It is strange to think that there were people who

* "Near to this Place
Lies the Body of
The Reverend Laurence Sterne, A.M.,
Died September 13th, 1768,
Aged 53 years.
'*Ah! molliter ossa quiescant.*'

"If a sound Head, warm Heart, and Breast humane,
Unsullied Worth, and Soul without a stain;
If mental Powers could ever justly claim
The well-won Tribute of immortal Fame,
Sterne was *the Man*, who, with gigantic Stride,
Mowed down luxuriant Follies far and wide.
Yet what, though keenest Knowledge of Mankind
Unseal'd to him the Springs that move the Mind;
What did it cost him? ridicul'd, abus'd,
By Fools insulted, and by Prudes accus'd,
In his, mild reader, view thy future Fate,
Like him despise, what 'twere a Sin to hate.

"This monumental stone was erected by two brother masons; for although he did not live to be a member of their society, yet as his all incomparable performances evidently prove him to have acted by rule and square, they rejoice in this opportunity of perpetuating his high and irreproachable character to after ages. "W. & S."

Both Sir Walter Scott and the "Brother Masons" were mistaken as to the month of his death. It is to the honour of a clergyman of the parish—a Mr. Potter—that a few years back he made a shilling subscription to have this headstone cleaned and repaired.

might have taken the skull of a second Yorick into their hand, as the Prince of Denmark did that of the first, and have moralised over it sadly. They might have thought of his life, weighed his character, not too partially, but tenderly and with allowance,—as I have striven to do in this memoir to the best of my ability,—and have summed up all, something after this fashion: He was more or less weak, vain, careless, idle, and given to pleasure;—these were his natural faults. He was free of pen and speech—profane sometimes—and did not honour the gown he wore;—these were the general scandals of his time, which seized on him like a contagion. But beside those faults or vices, were redeeming gifts of a generous sympathy and warmth, kind fatherly affection, a careful consideration (wonderful in a careless being) for the pecuniary interests of those for whom it was his duty to provide, a genial humour, and, strange as it may seem, a tone of natural piety. He was unfortunae in his marriage—unfortunate in his friends—unfortunate in the age, which seemed to strive how it should turn his head with flatteries; and unfortunate in a frame that was always ailing. His were, in short, as he said over and over again so pathetically, follies of heart and not of the head. These hindrances should be kept in view; and, when we would anticipate the task of the Recording Angel, should prompt us—not to blot out the entry for ever, but to set down a gentle and a charitable judgment.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

MR. STERNE'S WIDOW AND DAUGHTER.

It turned out that the widow and daughter were left in straitened circumstances. Yorick was to be no exception to the long roll of pleasant men who set tables in a roar, but who must die and not leave a shilling. His debts were £1,100—upon which must be reckoned that burnt-down vicarage of Sutton, whose rebuilding had been put off until too late. There was no will—which was to be expected. The widow took administration—just as Roger Sterne's widow had to take out administration—on June the fourth: and Doctor Topham, the hero of the "Good Warm Watch Coat," was the official who received the fees from her.

As a first step, everything at Coxwould was sold. The books—the same I suppose which he got "dirt-cheap" many years before—were sent to Messrs. Todd and Sotheran, of York, booksellers; and the auction catalogue of those gentlemen, containing "the valuable library of the late Rev. Mr. Sterne, author of 'Tristram Shandy,'" turned up at a public sale not long since. But, taken together, his "effects" did not produce more than £400. Creditors began to press. Mrs. Sterne had a little estate of forty

pounds a-year settled on herself; and out of this pittance they undertook to honour Mr. Sterne's memory and discharge the balance of seven hundred. A well-meant, but unmeaning tribute, as any business friend could have told them. For they had nothing else left to live upon, and any balance after their own support must have been ludicrously inadequate, even in partial satisfaction of such a sum. The Rev. Mr. Cheap began to press them about the burnt-down parsonage, and instituted a suit for dilapidations—which, as we have seen, they had to compromise later. This was brought on them by the carelessness of Mr. Sterne's curate, and should, in fairness, be deducted from his own proper liabilities; which leaves his personal debts at a not very extravagant figure.

But the Yorkshire people, hearing of their distress, and perhaps as a tribute to the late Mr. Yorick, came generously to their assistance; and at the great York races in the August of the same year, a handsome collection was made, amounting to eight hundred pounds. Even in the shape of this last tribute to his memory, there was something odd and Shandean. The subscriptions were to be received, not through the common channels of banks, newspaper columns, and local secretaries: but the appeal is made upon a race-ground, and to the Shandean congregation that spreads over a race-ground!

This aid set them a little at their ease, and at last enabled them to go up to London, where they had lodgings in Gerrard Street, Soho, at Mr. Williams',

paper merchant. No doubt it was Mr. James, their father's friend, who had looked out for these apartments, and chosen what was nearest to his own house. They had brought a bundle of Mr. Sterne's old Sermons, most likely those "sweepings of his study" he had put aside as least worthy of publication. Becket had given them "a trifle" for the copyright, but they hoped by getting subscriptions, which would come to them exclusively, to make up a handsome sum.

Mr. Wilkes was now in London, and Miss Lydia wrote to him from Gerrard Street a quiet humble letter, asking his patronage and influence with distinguished friends. It began:—"Mrs. and Miss Sterne's compliments wait on Mr. Wilkes. They intend doing themselves the honour of calling upon him if not disagreeable. . . . They would not intrude, but they should be happy to see a person whom they honour, and whom Mr. Sterne greatly admired. Not to have a melancholy story to tell when they meet, Miss Sterne begs leave to tell it now in a few words." A very simple and artless letter, and this last stroke was unconsciously very happily suited to a man of Wilkes's rough and busy character, who would not like to look forward to a dismal interview.

He saw them, promised them his aid, and actually undertook to write the life of his departed friend. They were to give him all letters and materials. So had he undertaken the life of his dear friend Churchill. Hall Stevenson was also written to, and agreed to join in the undertaking.

A work of this nature, as Miss Sterne wrote later, by "two men of such genius," would sell. And this being arranged, and having promised Mr. Wilkes, who seems to have been interested in Miss Sterne, to write to him, they left London for France, the country they both liked. They settled at Angoulême, and stopped at a M. Bologne's, Rue Cordeliers.

It came to July of the following year, and they had not heard a word of Mr. Wilkes, or of the coming Life. Then Miss Lydia wrote an artificial and almost pert letter:—"A correspondent like Mr. Wilkes," she said, "gives your humble servant more vanity than I thought I was capable of. I am an inch taller to-day than I was yesterday. I wish the French may not find a difference in my behaviour —*ce sera bien pire*. . . . Thank my stars, you promised not to show my letters to any one, not even to your confessor, remember that. Now to our journey —nothing agreeable in it, or diverting, I promise you. How much the French have the advantage of us. They give themselves ease by swearing, which *you know is talking bawdy*." She then describes their life; her sitting by the river, and reading Shakspeare or Milton to her mother, or playing on the guitar. Perhaps that guitar was the one of "*cinque corde*" which her fond father had ordered for her from Paris.

She then reminds Mr. Wilkes of his promise about the Life, and consults him about some illustrations for a new edition of "Tristram." She tells him to stimulate the publisher "to pay handsomely.

If he is cool upon the subject, say that the Life will be printed *with the original letters of Mr. Sterne and sold to another.* But, *entre nous*, we neither of us *wish to publish the letters*, but if we cannot do otherwise *we will*, and prefix the Life to them."

Mr. Wilkes took no notice of this appeal. The ferocious politics of his time had led him to the King's Bench Prison, where he had ample leisure; but he could not afford to waste time upon an obscure widow and her daughter in France. After many more months of delay, they made him a piteous appeal in the month of October. They needed the money sorely. Panchaud, the famous Paris banker, who had so often remitted to Mr. Sterne on his Sentimental Journey, had failed; and they had suffered. Hope deferred, they wrote, made the heart sick. "Three lines, with a promise of writing Tristram's life, for the benefit of his wife and daughter, would make us happy." Of this also no notice was taken.

It came to February, 1770, and then they wrote to Hall Stevenson, who had also been silent, begging him to proceed with the plan, and telling him significantly, that this piece of good-nature "will prove that Eugenius was the friend of Yorick."

To the shame of these men—both "gay men"—they left these letters unnoticed and their task unperformed. Nearly in the same manner had Wilkes behaved to the memory of Churchill. The image of that famous satirist was ever before him. It disturbed his sleep. He could not rest until he had paid this dear friend the tribute of a memoir.

But he never fulfilled that labour of love; and as he behaved to Churchill, so he behaved to Sterne. Such is the shrivelled fruit usually borne by mere convivial friendships. ...

The Sermons soon appeared, with a handsome list of subscribers; but not so numerous or imposing as the first. The names of about a hundred clergymen are to be found there, together with many fresh titles not in the first roll. Mr. Warren Hastings, the Duchess of Kingston, Mr. Edward Montague, Colonel Coote (of Pondicherry fame), Garrick, Foote, William Godwin, and Mrs. Draper, are the names most noticeable. The project of his Life was then given up for the present. Miss Sterne afterwards married a M. de Medalle (or Medaille), and then signed herself "Lydia Sterne de Medalle." Nothing has transpired about her husband, or their life in the intermediate time. It is known, however, that Mrs. Sterne died before the year 1775. In that year appeared the famous Yorick and Eliza Letters; and Mrs. Sterne, leaving it as an injunction on her daughter, that if any letters of Mr. Sterne's should be published by other hands, those in her possession should also be printed, Madame de Medalle came to London and put them into Becket's hands. With the letters she gave the simple little autobiography of three or four pages, written by her father a few months before his death, a preface, and some elegies on Mr. Sterne, taken from the poet's-corner of magazines.*

* Mr. Laing, of Edinburgh, once had the original of this memoir in his possession, but parted with it.

The whole was wretchedly put together, and with a shameful carelessness, which has fatally injured his fame and memory. Clumsy suppressions of names at the beginning of a letter, but revealed at the close—initials, like "D—— G——, Esq.," put with an affectation of mystery, but which any one could translate; strange unseemly allusions, written off in a boisterous, rollicking humour, to his friend Stevenson, and which it was fair and warrantable license in an editor to remove. These were the blemishes, which, for a few guineas, the daughter allowed to go forth and stain her father's memory. The publisher was no doubt afraid of the book losing a Shandean piquancy if they were expunged. No writer, as I said before, has ever been so cruelly dealt with; and there are but few writers who could stand the test of having every line in their letters printed without alteration.

The book was inscribed to Garrick, in a dedication that affected to be Shandean and *débonnaire.* "When I was asked, to whom I should dedicate these volumes, *I answered carelessly*, to no one. . . I went home to my lodgings, and gratitude warmed my heart to such a pitch, that I vow'd they should be dedicated to the man my father so much admired." That "I went home to my lodgings," was meant to be in the manner of the great departed Shandean; but it did not sit so well on Miss Lydia Sterne. After this she drops out of sight. The tradition in the family is, that in the fury of the French Revolution, which set in fifteen years afterwards, the child that Sterne so loved, perished.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

THE SHANDY PLAGIARISMS.

STERNE had been dead some twenty years, and "Tristram Shandy" had been in the hands of the world for nearly thirty, when some curious whispers began to go round, that the oddest of books was indebted for all its oddity to many different sources beside the author's mind. There first came a stray hint or two from the corner of a magazine or newspaper; but, by and by, a pleasant book-worm, Doctor Ferriar, who had long been on the track, read a paper to a Manchester Literary Association, containing a minute history of his curious discoveries.*

This gentleman's reading happened to have lain in exactly the same direction as Mr. Sterne's. His taste, too, was for the quaint little books of facetiæ which lay on the shelves at Skelton Castle. He knew all the old French jesters and the Jest Books, and their curious dialects. A sort of lore, at that time confined to a surprisingly small circle; for as yet the black-letter societies had not been formed, and dukes did not care to bid thousands for a unique "Decameron."

* They were published in a volume later, and reached a second edition.

It was now said that many of the strange and almost grotesque theories and speculations found in "Tristram"—the ludicrous maunderings of Mr. Shandy, his plans, his conceits and reflections, which had excited so much laughter and astonishment, were all drawn from this well of antique drollery. And certain authors were named—Rabelais, Montaigne, Bouchet, Beroalde, Scarron, and, above all, Burton —whose works had served him as text-books.

It was perfectly true. From Burton's strange book, known as the "Anatomy of Melancholy," whole paragraphs had been taken, which, when placed side by side with the original, did not differ by a single word. The grief of Mr. Shandy over his son, and his dismal reflections, the "Lady Baussiere's" inattention to the importunate beggar, and much more, are all to be read, with a few trifling changes, in the "Anatomy." And yet, though this has been the most insisted on of all Mr. Sterne's pilferings, it really amounts almost to nothing; for those familiar with Burton know well that he is nothing but a patchwork himself—a mere "cento" of quotations, and the richest storehouse of scraps and gatherings from every quarter that is known; therefore, when Mr. Sterne helped himself in this quarter, he did not take Burton, but merely what Burton had taken.* Half-a-dozen pages would exhaust these pilferings.

* Burton is under weighty obligation to Sterne, for this association with "Tristram" brought the older book into extraordinary demand. It was immediately reprinted, and the quaint old writer forced into a cheap modern suit. "I know nothing," says Charles Lamb, in his delightful way, "more *heartless* than the reprint of Burton."

The odd learning upon noses, and the allusion to that feature and its significance, must have struck one of Mr. Sterne's tone of mind; and when he alludes to the supposed origin of "soft noses" he had in his mind the grotesque conversation between Gargantua Grangousier and the monk in Rabelais. The point of Mr. Shandy's remark to Obadiah when tasking him with the failure of his "favourite mare," is an old jest from the *Moyen de Parvenir*. But the author of "Tristram" has re-cast it, refitted it, and made it more broadly humorous. He was anticipated in many little points and affectations which he fancied were wholly original. The black page after Yorick's death is to be seen in Fludd's great History of the World; and the shower of dashes over many pages had been tried before; but to the wrong paging, the "marbled pages," and the flourish of Trim's stick, I believe he has the undisputed title. These were poor tricks, of which he was fully rich enough to have been independent. It is almost provoking to think that Mr. Sterne should have laid himself open to these charges, as he stood in no need of the trifling assistance gained by such insignificant larcenies. He was overflowing with private resources of his own, and it was only an unlucky moment of laziness that made him help himself to what was ready to his hand. The glorious humour of "Tristram," buoyant and genial, was laid up in abundance in his stores, and would have served all his necessities without foreign assistance.

Up and down, in short, there are allusions fetched

from other books: the cast of the whole Shandean history, its tone and manner and thought, is such as would come from one saturated, as it were, with Rabelais, and the school that imitated Rabelais. But this is all. There remains the humour, the gaiety, the farce, which is all his own. There remains the clear distinct gallery of Shandean men and women, who live and breathe and walk before our eyes: the Captain, the Corporal, the Father and the Widow, and the amiable Yorick.

Mr. Sterne was at no pains even to conceal the authors' names whom he thus worked into his own book. He tells us of Bruscambille, the great authority on the nose question, which his father purchased at a stall for three half-crowns. ("There are not three copies in all Christendom," said the man of the stall.)* He alludes fearlessly to Montaigne and to Rabelais. He mentions the precious "Serèes of Bouchet." He alludes to "the learned Bishop Hall." He owns boldly that he was indebted for the learning on noses to Pantagruel. The value of these little larcenies, taken collectively, would scarcely fill half a-dozen pages, out of the nearly three thousand that make up "Tristram."

It seemed almost as though he meant to have a sly Shandean joke at some of the detectives, who he knew would be presently on his track, when he worked a passage from Burton into "Tristram Shandy," which dwelt on the fashion in which new writers help themselves from the old. "As apothecaries," said Burton, "we make new mixtures

* There have been more discovered since Mr. Shandy's day.

every day pour out of one vessel into another;" and again, "we twist the same rope again and again." "Shall we for ever," said Sterne, "make new books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring out of one vessel into another? Are we for ever to be twisting and untwisting the same rope?" For which a curious musical parallel may be found in Haydn; who, in setting the words, "Thou shalt not steal," has used a passage from some other composer.

Much stress, too, was laid on his adoption of the affecting passage from Burnet, as to the choice of an inn as a place to die in. But it should be remembered that Burnet reports it of Archbishop Leighton, and that Cicero had uttered the same wish before; and that it is an idea, which, under various shapes, has occurred to many who have found delight and comfort in an inn parlour.* After all, there can be no copyright in ideas.

But the truth is, in all the Shandean classics there is a family likeness—they have virtually but the one stock in trade. All these French humorists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had common forms, as it were, of thought, and traditional jokes, which were passed on from one to the

* Compare Shenstone's charming lines upon an inn, really containing the same thought; and which Doctor Johnson loved to declaim with sonorous emphasis. Boswell says he repeated the last verse "with great emotion:"

"Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his footsteps may have been,
Will sigh to think he still has found
His warmest welcome at an Inn."

other. Their humour was of the grotesque and extravagant,—a limited range; and they seemed never to be tired of telling the same story with little variations of shape. As an instance, jesting on the nose was a favourite pastime; and odd speculations as to its relation to character, and what influences determined its length in some men, its breadth in others, gave scope to the strangest and most comic theories. The department relating to noses, the satires, essays, and burlesque disquisitions, in Latin, French, and Italian, fill a large shelf in the macaronic library.

Sterne, ranging through all those quaint pastures, meeting the same conceit over and over again in Beroalde, Bouchet, Rabelais, and many more, filled his mind with those grotesque images and allusions, and fell, as it were, into the shape of thought common to the time. These ideas, common property of so many, make up the large ideal of Shandean humour. Students of Swift, Rabelais, and Montaigne, and of all the great masters of humour, will see what a community of thought and topics there is among them all. A single instance will illustrate this.

The idea of an eccentric father debating over the education of his son, and laying out Utopian schemes and odd plans for the formation of his mind, may be traced from Mr. Shandy's parlour to Martinus Scriblerus, from Scriblerus to Montaigne, and from Montaigne back to Pantagruel. True humour draws its inspiration from nature, and we have the crotchets of Mr. Shandy imported into

real life, in the curious theories of the father of Miss Edgeworth.

In this "Detection" of Dr. Ferriar, there is a good deal of unintentional deceit. The author was seduced from the purpose of his book by his genuine love of old lore; and three-fourths of the work are agreeable rambles in black-letter pastures. The reader, seeing this list of old French humorists, is apt to assume that from all these Sterne had helped himself. As a specimen, too, of some of the supposed plagiarism on which he rests, I give one, where the resemblance is of the faintest sort. "J'ai connu un gentilhomme," says Marville, "qui, ayant une vénération singulière pour ces deux maisons de Guise et de Montmorency, ne pouvait se consoler de ce qu'il s'y était trouvé deux camus, comme si ce défaut en diminuait le lustre."—"He (Mr. Shandy) would often declare, in speaking his thoughts upon the subject, that he did not conceive how the greatest family in England could stand it out against an uninterrupted succession of six or seven short noses." Dr. Ferriar adds, justly, he is "inclined to doubt" if Sterne had read this author. There can be no question, in any view, how much the English author by his touch has turned a mere hint into a a rich stroke of humour. The Sorlisi affair, a consistorial suit of ordinary character, which fills a long chapter in Doctor Ferriar's book, is ludicrously far-fetched as an origin for the humours of Mrs. Wadman.

Lovers of Sterne will, however, regret that at least three of his most charming thoughts should not have

been his own. We must give up Uncle Toby's fly —the pretty bit of consolation to Maria, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb"*—and, what is the greatest sacrifice, Captain Shandy's famous recording angel. The fly, according to Balzac, was originally put out of the window by James the First of England, who made a remark exactly the same as that of Uncle Toby. His "shorn lamb" is found in a Languedoc proverb, and there is a very similar thought in the "Outlandish Proverbs, selected by Mr. G. H., 1640." "To a close-shorne sheepe God gives wind by measure." And the famous recording angel has a parallel in a MS. by a monk Alberic, who lived about the year 1100. "A demon holds a book in which are written the sins of a particular man, and an angel drops on it from a phial a tear which the sinner had shed in doing a good action, and his sins are washed out." This, however, is quite a coincidence, for Sterne could never have seen the monk's MS. And Sterne's thought is exquisitely artistic, both in brevity, dramatic effect, and music.† Mr. Moore worked the idea into his "Peri" without scruple.

> "Black as the damned drops that fall
> From the denouncing Angel's pen
> Ere Mercy weeps them out again."

We may track him, however, successfully in another direction, where it is no discredit for him

* Many pious persons have supposed that this is to be found in the Scripture, and a clergyman is said to have actually preached a sermon upon that text.

† "Notes and Queries."

to be found out. I have mentioned that he must have found the names of Trim, Toby, Eugenia, Diego, and Obadiah, in Shadwell's plays. Mr. Jackson discovered the names of Maronette, Battarelle, and Giol, characters in the "Dissertation on Whiskers" in the Girard-Cadière process—a common book on the stalls.* A book exactly in Sterne's "line." The name La Fleur, and a trait of his character, is to be found in Bayle.† But while the originality of "Tristram Shandy" is in the main secure, I am afraid, in the case of the Sermons, he seems to have cast away all notions of literary morality. I find that the famous sermon on Conscience which was preached to the judges, and which Trim read aloud, is in manner, argument, order, and sometimes words, almost wholly Swift's. His depredations stretched in all directions. From Burnet's "Safe Way to Happiness" he took a passage in his twenty-eighth sermon, and from the same author's "Nature and Grace" he helped himself to a large passage in his thirty-first sermon. From Norris he took many passages, as also from Bishop Hall; and in one of Bentley's sermons is to be found almost word for word the picture of the Inquisition. The most daring, however, of his plagiarisms, was that of some passages in his seventh posthumous sermon, which were literally transferred wholesale from Leighton's twelve sermons, the author of which was an obscure prebendary, not likely to attract notice.‡

* Jackson's "Four Ages." † Ibid.

‡ We must even refuse the extenuation allowed him by Dr. Ferriar,

He is even to be found copying from himself, and to save himself trouble sometimes reproduced a whole passage from an old sermon in a new one.* The idea of the "hobby horse" is to be found in "Don Guzman d'Olfarache."

In the "Sentimental Journey," too, it has been said that there is great resemblance to the tone of Marivaux and Crebillon. This, however, is far too wide a field, to make such a charge of any serious weight. The influence of Marivaux and his style was felt more widely in French literature than is now supposed; and his peculiar manner for a time leavened and refined a vast deal of the lighter literature of his day. "Marivauder" even became a French word. For Crebillon, Sterne made no secret of his admiration: he put his "Egarements" into the hands of the French soubrette he met on the Quai Conti; and I dare say, if one were inclined to search these questionable and once fashionable romances, some hints for the scenes in the "Sentimental Journey" might be lighted on. Scarron certainly supplied him with the scene at the theatre, where the huge giant stood in the way

in the case of the grotesque openings to his Sermons (*e. g.*, "That I deny!" after the text was delivered), prototypes for which are to be found in the odd Shandean book called "Friar Gerund." Dr. Ferriar says Sterne could not have seen this curious production, as it appeared *after* the publication of "Tristram Shandy." The truth is, it was published *before* it, and was just the book to have found its way to the Skelton library. Still, one like Sterne, familiar with the "Ana," must have met numbers of droll preaching stories of this class.

* See the passage on David cutting off the skirt of Saul's robe, in the sermon "On Self-Knowledge," to be found, almost word for word, in a previous sermon.

of the dwarf. Yet if we put the two side by side, it must be owned the Englishman has made it his own by a few touches of delicate sentiment. Even Voltaire noticed the general likeness of the Shandean humour to that of Scarron.

But if Sterne has helped himself to the fare of his neighbours and predecessors, ample retribution has overtaken him. No writer has ever been pillaged so mercilessly, or his style and tone so often reproduced with profit to the imitators. The catalogue of *professed* Shandean imitations would fill many pages. Stupid continuations of his "Sentimental Journey," taken up at that unfinished last sentence—new "Sentimental Journeys," in French and English, maudlin travesties of the original—new "Tristram Shandys," like John Buncle, Junior, the Trifler—floods of spurious Letters to Eliza, and of Letters from Eliza, as spurious—a stream of forged letters, marvels of dull workmanship, and to be detected at a glance—this was the heavy penalty which, by a curious fatality, he had to pay for his own trespasses in the same direction. The most notorious modern imitation is that of M. Philarête Chasles, who, taking up Trim's story of the King of Bohemia and his Seven Castles—beyond the commencement of which he was never allowed to travel—has actually a large volume, which can only be likened to "Tristram" in its profuse "dashes," interruptions, digressions, and other elements of the Shandy *matériel*. He has even improved upon the original by writing sentences upside down.

But these, as has been shown, were tricks un-

worthy of the original author, and not likely to be successful in an imitation. This is, indeed, what has brought what may be called the Sterne sentiment into discredit. Such sickly imitations have naturally disgusted the world. As to that charge of false sentiment, its fairest refutation is the contrasting of his books with those of the same class that appeared in his own day. Already, before his time, a stream of *fade* sentiment had begun to flow; which, feebly imitating the excellences, and grossly caricaturing the weaknesses of the great master, became almost an existing nuisance in the literature up to the end of the century. All the novels, even in some degree the excellent stories of Miss Burney, became saturated with this weak maudlin stream. The poor conceits of Merry and the Della Cruscan School helped to increase the evil. There were Sentimental Magazines, Sentimental Dialogues, and Triumphs of Sentiment: maunderings like the "Distressed Lovers, or the History of Edward and Eliza;" or the story of "Indiana, the Virtuous Orphan," full of amatory drivelling, and insufferably tedious. Beside these performances, Mr. Sterne's sentiment reads fresh, clear, healthy, and perfectly natural.

There have been many posthumous tributes to Mr. Sterne's sentiment. In the heart of the French Revolution there was brought out at the Vaudeville a little piece called "Sterne, ou le Voyageur Sentimental," and in England, Leonard Macnally put on the stage a dramatised version of Uncle Toby and his Wadman love. Still later came Colman,

with the admirable comedy of the "Poor Gentleman," into which he imported Le Fever and the Corporal. But these characters, like many Shaksperean characters, should be always kept incorporeal. The stage Corporal Foss, and even Leslie's Uncle Toby, only disenchant. In 1783, Mrs. Henry introduced into a sort of monologue, called the "Je ne sçai quoi," which was delivered at the Belle Assemblée, a panegyric on Sterne, affectedly written in imitation of Yorick's manner; and Mr. Henderson, of Covent Garden Theatre, was in the habit of declaiming passages from "Tristram" with singular dramatic effect, at the "Shandean Club."

It is surprising how shrewd French critics could have been so dull as to admit such an imposture as "The Koran" into the list of Sterne's writings. The weakest critical sagacity must have detected it. It is clumsy to a degree. Yet men like M. Janin and M. Chasles have received it without hesitation, and have dwelt on selected beauties in these false gospels.*

To deal with the important subject of the Shandean humour—to trace it from the old French jesters, through Rabelais down to Sterne—would require a whole volume. The proper place for such a discussion would be in the shape of a commentary upon "Tristram Shandy."† Even to dwell upon its

* I have furnished to Mr. Bohn's excellent Bibliographical Manual (which is quite as much his own, as it is Lowndes'), a list of these curious Shandy imitations, to which I would venture to refer the reader.

† Such as I hope to offer to the public later.

beauties, its surprising mirthfulness, its boisterousness, its delightful figures and characters, its pathos, its odd learning, its burlesque, and its wit, would take up far too much space. We can only lament the blemishes in which, by a strange infatuation, the author fancied he was only approaching yet nearer to his master, Rabelais, and which by a curious retribution has only narrowed the circle of his readers.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

MR. STERNE WRITES AND CORRECTS.

We have seen Mr. Sterne sitting at his table, pen in hand, with his "fur cap" on, and his "bad cassock" wrapped about him, starting up, sitting down again and inking his furniture, as he hurries on the instalment of "Tristram" then in hand. The true careless spendthrift Shandean should have a bleared, blotted MS.—illegible and slovenly—and yet this, like many other things in Mr. Sterne's life, is a surprise. No one wrote so clear, clean, and legible a hand. Fine, bold, bright, steady characters, almost neat in their shape, were what came from his erratic pen. He seems even to have used "lines," an old-fashioned aid to writing with regularity. A fair copy was always made of his original draft by some other hand, and over this he went very carefully again, making minute alterations.

Some of these MS. still remain. At Skelton Castle is a book or two of "Tristram;" in the British Museum is the first half of the "Sentimental Journey;" and Mr. Rogers showed Mr. Moore one morning the original of one of the Sermons, also carefully corrected. It struck Mr. Moore that one of these emendations was scarcely an improvement.

Speaking of the Jews, he had called them "a thoughtless and thankless people," for which he substituted "this thankless and peculiarly ungrateful people." In the Skelton MS. is a slight alteration which shows great nicety of touch. "O Garrick," he said, "how gladly would I sit down and write such another," &c., which he compressed into "how gladly would I write such another." But the "Sentimental Journey" MS. is the most curious instance of careful elaboration,* and some of the alterations are so characteristic, that I do not scruple to pause a little in this place and examine them in detail.

Thus, in the first few lines, "my gentleman" turned on him originally with the most civil *insolence* in the world, which on reflection seemed a little contradictory, so he made it "triumph." For "should give these rights," he put "should give a man these rights," and "I am determined to look into them," became "I'll look into them." Speaking to the monk, he distinguished between certain persons and others "who have no other plan in the world but to be a burden to it for the love of God," which became, "no other plan in life but to get through it in sloth and ignorance, for the love of God." And when the poor Franciscan meekly bowed his head and made no reply, "Nature seemed to have done with her resentments in him; *at least* she showed none," none but a master of the elegances of English would have struck out that "at

* It is the very copy that went to the press, for the printer's pencil-marks are still on it. It came from the Farnborough family, who possess several articles that once belonged to Sterne.

least." When the door was shut, Mr. Sterne uttered two "Pshaws!" which he reduced to one. For "the whole body of travellers," he substituted, with more elegance, "the whole circle of travellers," and for "in quest of knowledge," put "in pursuit." "Four long months" had elapsed since the *désobligeante* had finished its course, but he drew his pen through the word "long." But the most amusing alteration is in the meditation on this famous *désobligeante*. The sentence now stands, "and when a few words will rescue misery out of her distress, I hate the man who can be a churl of them"—but it was originally, "when a few *little* words will set the post-chaise of an innocent traveller agoing," &c. How much the phrase has gained by the alteration is plain. He even finds it difficult to satisfy himself as to the position of the words "M. Dessein." "It must cast a damp, M. Dessein, upon your spirits—you suffer as much as the machine," did not sound so musical as "must cast a damp upon your spirits—you suffer, M. Dessein, as much as the machine."

When he and the lady were shut up in the remise—"a colloquy of five minutes in such a situation, which, by the way, is one of those things which can happen to a man but once in his life," was an idea that first occurred to him, but he afterwards struck out the last half of the sentence. He altered "overthrows" to "discomfitures"—"hurt" to "mystified." "It begat a silence," offended him, and became "we remained silent." It is almost droll to see what his sentiment had betrayed him into writing, on Father Lorenzo's grave, "they all

struck so forcibly upon my affections that I wept over him as *a widow.*" This seemed a little ambiguous, and it became, "I burst into a flood of tears." This refining process is nowhere so exemplified as in the ending to the story of the "grisset." It stands now "so, counting the money into her hand, and with a lower bow than one generally makes to a shopkeeper's wife, I went out, &c."—originally it had the coarser shape of, "and giving it (her hand) something betwixt a shake and a squeeze as I did it, we both returned our thanks together." It is very curious, being thus admitted behind the scenes.

In spelling and French Mr. Sterne made terrible blunders. It is amusing to see how, in the "Sentimental Journey," at least, the printers carefully repaired his spelling mistakes; but for his French they could do nothing. "Tristram Shandy," however, is thickly sown with all sorts of errors—wrongly spelt words, like "assimulated," or "course" for "curse," "akes" for "aches," "statute" for "statue," and many more, with strange ungrammatical sentences —with passages that begin with a small letter, where they should have a capital—not one of which Mr. Dodsley's or Mr. Becket's "correctors" cared to set right. But his spelling in the MS. "Sentimental Journey" (even as amended by the printers) does not do credit to the Halifax schoolmasters. He spells "magazine" "magazeen," "buyer" "byer," "metals" "mettles," "meagre" "meager," "vineyard" "vinierd," "chevalier" "chevilier," "ass" "asse," "good wine" "goad wine," "sought "saught,"

"forty" "fourty," with many more. His French, however, on which he prided himself, was very weak indeed, both in spelling and grammar. He had a happy instinct for the idioms, which he generally succeeded in grasping, though not in the correct shape. His French letters must have amused his French friends.

He starts with the famous little carriage that only held one passenger, and which he makes masculine instead of feminine—a *désobligeant* instead of a *désobligeante*. The little French captain addresses the French lady in this odd language—"Apparament vous etez Flammande?" leaving out the "que." He also questions her as to where she came from, "Vous n'etez pas de Londre?" But perhaps the most curious mistake of the whole series occurs at the inn in Montreuil (which Mr. Sterne spells in many awkward ways, shifting from Montriul to Montriuil), where the landlord, speaking of Janatone, tells how "*un mylord anglais presentoit un ecu a la fille de chambre,*" where he uses *présenter* in the unusual sense of "*donner*" or "*offrir,*" uses the imperfect instead of the aorist; and, finally, makes Janatone a *fille de chambre*, instead of a *fille d'auberge*, or *la fille* simply. The strange use of *présenter* mystified the French translators wonderfully; and the oddest part of the whole is that in his MS. he had "*donnoit,*" but struck it out.

La Fleur, the famous servant, was gifted with a certain captivating "prevenancy;" "*for* there was a passport in his very looks" which drew every one to him. These are merely specimens; but it is not

too much to say, that every bit of French imported into the "Sentimental Journey" is faulty in some degree.

When the lady is shut up in the carriage with Mr. Sterne, she exclaims, not, "Voici qui est plaisant"—as a French lady might say—but "C'est bien comique," which is true English-French. More droll still is his calling the landlord of his hotel the "maître d'hôtel."

There are a good many maimed and halting sentences scattered here and there through his books, which a little carefulness would have set straight. "I believe you," said the French count; "ni encore that of our women, if, par hazard, they fell in your way, that the prospect would not affect you." Again, "Madam de V—— was vibrating betwixt the first of these epochas." "The first (reason) was, why the man should *only* tell his story to the sex." "We get forward in the world, not so much by doing services, as receiving them." "A single time or two."

Mr. Sterne, in his letter to the American Doctor Eustace, alluded to the way his book had made in France, Germany, and Italy. It is to be suspected that this was only a pardonable delusion into which he had been seduced by the compliments of his foreign friends. Such men as D'Holbach and Diderot might have it on their tables and affect to read a few pages, but to the mass of even educated foreigners, it must have been a book of cabalistics. It was not until many years after his death that a M. Fresnais was found to undertake the task

of presenting "Tristram" to his countrymen in a French dress. What a faithful reproduction this must have been, may be gathered from a remark of M. Fresnais' own. "J'étais obligé," says he, in his preface, "*de retrancher* beaucoup et *de suppléer* à *ce* que je retranchai. Les *plaisanteries de M. Sterne ne m'ont pas en effet paru toujours bonnes.* Je les ai laissées où je les ai trouvées, *et j'en ai substitué d'autres.*"

A more singular confession is not to be found in the history of translation. This gentleman was fortunately not able to complete his work, and a M. Bonnais was found to continue the task. With what spirit he came to the business may be gathered from a careless remark of his, when speaking of the labours of his predecessor: "*j'ai usé de la même liberté que lui.*" It may be conceived what sort of a "Tristram Shandy" found its way into French hands. M. Michot, however, who is a good English scholar, came later, and gave to his countrymen a more faithful reproduction of the great English book of humour. Still, in a French dress it has suffered cruelly, as all works of an original sort must, by translation. Anything less French, too, can scarcely be conceived. M. Janin calls it happily an "apocalypsé romanesque," and likens it to a noisy conversation, where everybody talks together. When it appeared, he says, no one understood a single word, afterwards they began to find in it an indescribable charm, because they understood a little; and at the end they finished by again understanding nothing. "C'était une bizarrerie nouvelle, même comme bizarrerie; c'était le plus singu-

lier pêle-mêle de bon sens et de paradoxes, de probité et de licence, d'enthousiasme et d'ironie, qui fut jamais."*

But it is very different with the "Sentimental Journey." It has been received with delight by all Europe. The French have openly made it their own, and translated it over and over again; they have edited it with notes and an intelligent commentary; a trouble which has not been spent on it by any of Mr. Sterne's countrymen. They have even dressed it in the rich suit of an *édition de luxe*, and sent it out decorated by the pencil of Tony Johannot. Naturally they pronounce it the best of his works,† for it is the one that is most intelligible. It is also thoroughly French in grace and familiarity, and in that simplicity which is found in the stage character the French call *ingenue*. One of the best of French critics calls it his chef d'œuvre. Ugo Foscolo translated it into Italian. It has found its way into German, Dutch, and even Polish (printed at Warsaw). A fresh testimony to its merits is, that it has been re-translated in these countries very recently. M. de Wailly has turned it into French very lately; and the Warsaw translation is dated 1845. It in fact seems to have much the same calm popularity that the "Vicar of Wakefield" enjoys.‡

* Janin, Introduction to the "Sentimental Journey."

† This is M. Walcknaer's testimony in the *Biographie Universelle*.

‡ The stream of English and Irish editions that I have examined, on stalls and in catalogues, both for size, shape and number, is absolutely bewildering. I find an edition of Newberry's dated nineteen years after Sterne's death, which is the tenth.

And this favour is worthily merited, if grace, nature, true sentiment, and exquisite dramatic power, be qualities that are to find a welcome. And, apart from these attractions, it has a unique charm of its own, a flavour, so to speak, a fragrance that belongs to that one book alone.* Never was there such a charming series of complete little pictures, which, for delicacy, seem like the series of medallions done on Sèvres we sometimes see in old French cabinets. The colour and picturesqueness of the Calais incidents, the delightful ease and *nature* of his situations, the conversation, are all in a vein of the truest comedy. It is indeed marvellous how the name of Sterne should have been ever coupled with false sentiment; as, with the exception of a few artificial phrases, nothing can be more genuine or natural, than the scenes in his famous "Journey." "*C'est un voyage fait à l'amble*," says M. Janin, very happily; a journey made in a gentle canter. The figures stand out brightly, like coloured photographs, and in what number and variety! Old Calais, with its old inn; M. Dessein, the monk—one of the most artistic figures on literary canvass; the charming French lady whom M. Dessein shut into the carriage with him; the *débonnaire* French captain, and the English travellers returning, touched in with only a couple of strokes. La Fleur, the valet; the charming French glove-seller, whose pulse he felt;†

* Even in his moralising over the famous *désobligeante*—a little profanely entitled "an old cab"—critics seem to have missed the quiet exaggeration, and air half-serious and half-burlesque, which Mr. Sterne intended.

† Newton's charming picture of this scene is familiar to all.

her husband who passed through the shop, and pulled off his hat to monsieur, for the honour he was doing him; the little maid in the bookseller's shop who put his little present "a part;" the charming Greuze "grisset" who sold him the ruffles; the reduced chevalier selling *pâtés*, the groups of beggars at Montreuil; the *fade* Count de Bissie, who read Shakspeare; the charming pastoral characters, reaping the vintage, and the crowd of minor *croquis*—postilions, landlords, notaries, soldiers, abbés, *précieuses*, maids, merely touched, but touched with wonderful art, make up a surprising collection of distinct and graphic characters.*

How much wit and knowledge of character, and how many a neat thought, has been fitted into these travels, a very few specimens will show. Most truthful is the sudden change from the after-dinner benevolence, to his stern treatment of the monk—for "no man cares to have his virtues the sport of contingencies." "Nature is shy, and hates to act before spectators, but in such an unobserved corner you sometimes see a single short scene of hers worth all the sentiments of a dozen French plays compounded together." "The two upright vestal sisters, unsapped by caresses, unbroke in upon by tender salutations." Or the pleasant touches of French character: "La Fleur bore his misfortune like a French Christian, saying neither more or less upon it than, *Diable.*" The description of the Pont Neuf,

* Maria of Moulines, though she enjoyed great popularity in her day, has always seemed to be the least dramatic of Mr. Sterne's gallery of characters. The sentiment is a little sickly.

with the quiet comment on it, is very happy. "Of the bridges which were ever built, the whole world who have passed over the Pont Neuf must own, that it is the noblest, the finest, the grandest, the lightest, the largest, the broadest, that ever conjoined land and land together upon the face of the terraqueous globe. *By this it seems as if the author of the fragment had not been a Frenchman.*"

It is curious that all who have relished Tristram Shandy have been enthusiastic in their admiration. The good Archdeacon of Carlisle said that "reading Tristram was the true *summum bonum* of life." Leigh Hunt, who enjoyed books as he did the company of his friends, speaks of the Shandean characters with a delightful enthusiasm.

"But what shall I say to thee, thou quintessence of the milk of human kindness . . . . thou lover of widows, thou master of the best of corporals, thou whistler at excommunications, thou high and only final Christian gentleman, thou pitied of the devil himself, divine Uncle Toby?" He holds that "Shakspeare himself never arrived at a character like thine." "As long as the character of Toby Shandy finds an echo in the heart of man, the heart of man is noble."

"This illustrious Irishman (I have a Shandean reason for speaking of him under that title) is Rabelais reborn at a riper period of the world, and gifted with sentiment. To accuse him of cant and sentimentality is itself a cant or an ignorance; or at least, if neither of these, it is but to misjudge him from *an excess of manner here and there.* The

matter always contains the solidest substance of truth and duty. Among passages which are supposed to be connected with coarseness, but really are not so, are some which are yet destined to be of important service." A more temperate, yet not less cordial, appreciation is to be found in the recently published 'Caxtonia;' the author of which doubts 'if any writer' of Sterne's day 'had, on the whole, so subtle and fine a perception of the various capacities of our language as the author of Tristram Shandy. With what finger, how light and strong, he flies over the keys of the instrument. What delicate elegance he can extract from words the most colloquial and vulgar; and again, with some word unfamiliar and strange, how abruptly he strikes on the universal chord of laughter!"

But perhaps the truest appreciation—because the most delicate and discriminative—of Sterne's gifts, is to be found in Mr. Elwin's "Quarterly Review" article, which contains a masterly analysis of the secret of the Shandean humour. Like Cervantes, Sterne's ideal of eccentricity was to represent his characters "as enthusiastic in pursuits which appear ridiculous to ordinary people;" but he worked out this ideal with more skill than the Spaniard, and triumphed over greater difficulty; for the Knight of La Mancha was insane, but Uncle Toby's delightful oddities fell within the range of average human eccentricity. "The strokes," continues this criticism with admirable justness, "with which these portraits are drawn are altogether so deep and yet so delicate, so truthful and yet so novel, so

simple in the outline and yet so varied in the details, and yet so winning, that we question if out of Shakspeare there is a single character in English fiction depicted with greater or even equal power. Next to Shakspeare, he is the one who leaves most to the reader. His work is full of interior meanings which escape the mind on a rapid perusal, and the interest is sustained, and the admiration increased, by the innumerable beauties which keep rising into view the longer we linger over it."

With this genial panegyric, I conclude the story of Laurence Sterne's Life and Adventures. In taking leave I may add, that the memory of one of the greatest of humorists—of the man who added Uncle Toby to the immortal company to which Sir Roger and Parson Adams belong—remains now without a monument—beyond a common headstone—to do honour to his memory. Such indifference is surely unworthy of the nation. Our gallery of humorists is not so over-crowded as that we can afford to have one of the finest portraits covered up, and turned with its face to the wall. It is not too late to repair this long neglect: and we may trust that the present generation will not go by without an honourable reparation—a statue—or a tablet—in memory of the ENGLISH RABELAIS.

APPENDIX.

A.

MR. THACKERAY'S "LECTURE."

In Mr. Thackeray's well-known Lecture upon Sterne—a masterpiece of skilful satire and dramatic invective—there are a few mistakes. These are not of very much importance: but may perhaps be appropriately pointed out in a life of Sterne.

"Roger Sterne . . . was the *second* son," &c.—P. 269. There is no authority for this statement.

"Richard Sterne, Archbishop of York in the reign of James II."—*Ibid.* Archbishop Sterne died before James II. came to the throne.

"Roger was a Lieutenant in Handiside's regiment."—*Ibid.* It has been shown in the text that this is doubtful. He never held the rank of *Lieutenant* in that regiment.

"One relative of his mother's took her and her family under shelter for ten months at Mullingar: another collateral descendant of the Archbishop's housed them for a year at his castle near Carrickfergus."—P. 270.

This is confused. The "ten months" was spent at Elvington, and with a relative of his father's. The "relative of his mother's" lived in Wicklow, and entertained them for six months. And the "collateral descendant of the Archbishop" lived at Mullingar, not at Carrickfergus.

"Got the living of Sutton and Prebendary of York."—P. 271—*i. e.*, the Prebend of York.

"It was in December, 1767, that the Rev. Lawrence Sterne, the charming Yorick, &c., wrote the above-quoted

respectable letter to his friend in London," &c.—P. 276. And an argument, much to Sterne's prejudice, is founded on the date of the letter.

Now—1°. There is *no date* to the letter. 2°. In it Mr. Sterne mentions that he is a little over forty years old, which would bring it to, say, the year 1755, about twelve years before the time selected for it by Mr. Thackeray. 3°. It was addressed to a friend, not in London, but in Yorkshire.

"So was you know who." "You know who was, of course, Daniel Draper, Esq."—280. The reader is referred to p. 352 of Vol. II., and it will be seen that the reference is to other persons.

"Her ship was not out of the Downs, and the charming Sterne was at the Mount Coffee-house . . . offering that precious treasure, his heart, to Lady P——" —P. 281.

This letter, again, is undated; but, from internal evidence, must be put much further back.

"The departure of the *Earl of Chatham*, Indiaman, from Deal, on the 2nd of April, 1767."—P. 279.

The *Earl of Chatham* sailed on the 3rd of April.

B.

ADMINISTRATION OF LAURENCE STERNE.

4th June, 1768.—Administration of the Rev. Lawrence Sterne, late of Coxwold, in the county of York, but dying in the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, county of Middlesex (leaving goods, &c.), clerk, deceased, intestate (as it is asserted) was granted to Elizabeth Sterne, his widow and relict, being first sworn, &c., before the Right Worshipful Francis Topham, Doctor of Laws, Commissary.

No inventory was exhibited, but bond is entered.

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